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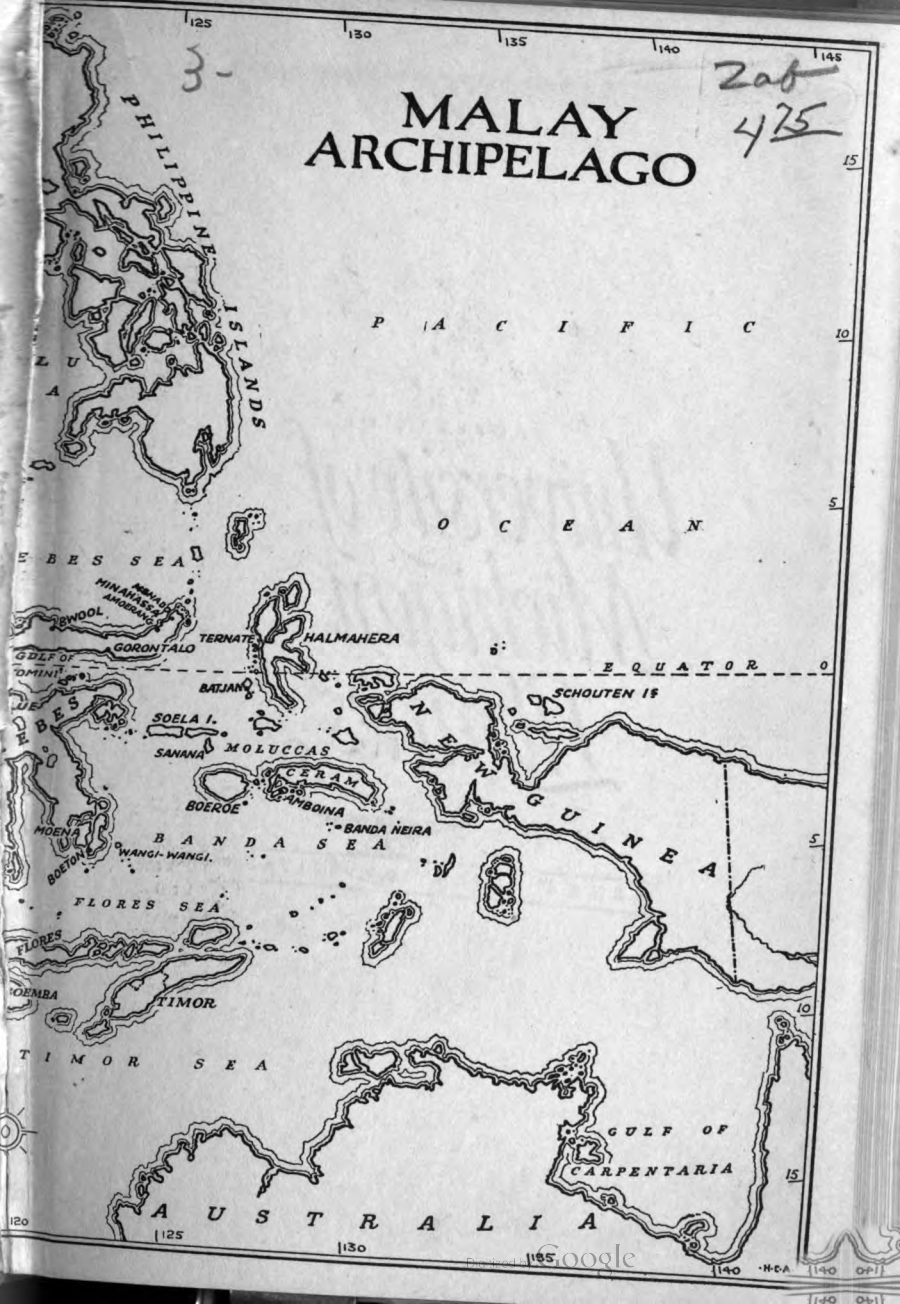
MALAY ARCHIPELAGO
PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
P A C I F I C
O C E A N
E B E S S E A
MINAHASSA
AMOORANG
BWOOL
GORONTALO
TERNATE
HALMAHERA
GULF OF
OMINI
E Q U A T O R
BATJAN
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SOELA I.
SANANA
MOLUCCAS
CERAM
BOERO
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BOETON
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THE MALAY PENINSULA AND ARCHIPELAGO

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KAMPONG BAHRU . . .

Cornish Pete smokes a cutty:
Ahmat flirts a cheroot.
Jennifer's flannel petticoats
Are bunchy and snug:
Fatima's kirtle,
Bright flowers in Batik,
Was woven in Sumatra.
Sou'westers and sea-boots
Would clash with the coconuts
Rotting on the sand.
All sorts of *ikans* live in the ocean
But they mostly catch themselves.
Perhaps a lobster will walk into this pot,
And perhaps he won't,
It doesn't matter.
Cottages at Polperro look ever so different,
But the smell
Ancient and fishlike
Is the same.

From *Songs of Singapore.*

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FISHING WITH JALA NET

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THE MALAY PENINSULA AND ARCHIPELAGO

by

ASHLEY GIBSON

Author of *Cinnamon and Frangipanni*

Illustrated by

BARBARA SHAW

London & Toronto

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TO MY WIFE

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PART I

BRITISH MALAYA

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL AND HISTORICAL

MALAYA is a country with very little history behind it, and cannot lay claim, like many other Oriental lands, to a storied past from which any wealth of relics remain to arouse the interest and excite the speculations of posterity. It provides a poor field, that is to say, for the archæologist and historian.

Such things as architectural remains, old monuments, survivals of the work of earlier craftsmen in the form of implements of utility or objects of æsthetic beauty or interest, are tangibilities that do exist, but are rarely come across even by the systematic inquirer, and when actually run to earth and catalogued seldom reveal themselves as of outstanding interest. It is odd that the Peninsula should show itself so poor in this regard when one considers how rich in archæological and kindred remains are the neighbouring territories of Indo-China and so many islands of the Dutch Archipelago, the explanation being, no doubt, that such places have aforetime, before the advent of the European,

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enjoyed civilisations of sorts, but this Peninsula never. Masons, smiths, weavers, and certain skilled (more or less) artificers in other crafts have worked here, but never in numbers, and never very busily. Why should they, indeed, when there has been nothing to make them? Take off the three or four pieces that its only populous townships stand for, and Malaya looks on the map like an empty draughtboard. Or not empty really, because the primal jungle is never that. There will be people in it, by no means busy people, but folk of three or four contrasted sorts, having amusing laws, legends, and other idiosyncrasies of their own. At least the ethnologist will have something to work upon. There will also be bird-song, butterflies, a myriad oddities of lesser animal life, and more of its larger forms than will altogether make, in some places, for peace and security.

Peaceful and secure, however, we contrive to remain, providing signal proof of the maxim that the country which has no history is a happy one. A copy of *The Times* open before me announces pontifically that "It is generally a sign of good political arrangements that they do not provoke constant discussion." The particular reference is to the Malay Peninsula, and I entirely agree with it. I wish, though, all the leader-writers in London would be more careful of their nomenclature when referring to Malaya. They *will* call it "Malay," just as they declare in the face of all protest that Singapore is the capital of the Federated Malay States. But then, of course, most post-office young ladies in the suburbs who deal with your parcels to and from those parts will insist that both are in India.

Perhaps it will be advisable to get Malaya's geography right before sketching, briefly, its history.

"British Malaya," roughly, is that part of our Oriental Empire which fills the south-east corner of Asia on the

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map. Strictly, it includes the Straits Settlements and so much of the Malay Peninsula as is under British influence, likewise the British possessions in Borneo, Brunei, Labuan, Sarawak, and the country governed by the British North Borneo Company, also the Cocos or Keeling Islands and Christmas Island. East and south of Borneo, there are islands all the way to New Guinea and the Australian mainland. Geographers and navigators have long since fallen into the habit of looking upon the bulk of these as one vast Malayan Archipelago. Our ancestors called them the East Indies; to the Dutch, whose whole Colonial Empire so many of them represent, they are still "India," or "Insulinde," which as a label I think suits them best. And to every Englishman whom Providence locates upon the Malay Peninsula for any term of his natural life, I recommend a tour of at least some portion of Insulinde's magical island world as part of his Malayan adventure. I took this opportunity myself, and shall have much to say about the rewards of that enterprise in this book.

But harking back to "British" Malaya, its two main and distinct units (geographically intermixed as they remain) are the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States. The Straits Settlements are British territory. The Federated Malay States are not. The former comprise the island and city of Singapore, the island and city—whose old name of Georgetown has fallen into desuetude—of Penang, and, on the mainland, Province Wellesley, Malacca and the Dindings. The total square mileage of this so scattered Crown Colony is just over 1500, but it includes Singapore and Penang, the largest towns in British Malaya, with populations of 350,000 and 123,000. The proportion these figures bear to British Malaya's total population of 3,358,000 is worth remark.

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Against this relatively limited area we have the Federated Malay States—Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, with a square mileage of 27,500, including the third and fourth cities of the Peninsula, Kuala Lumpur (the Federal capital—population 80,000) and Ipoh (head-quarters of the tin-mining industry—population 36,000).

Note should be taken of the "Unfederated" States —Johore, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu — total square mileage 23,500. The position of their rulers is comparable to that of the independent princes of India. Britain, while pledged to protect these States, and to all practical purposes governing them, does not in any sense possess them, but supplies their reigning sultans with advisers and certain officials. There are, of course, large rubber estates and other British-owned undertakings, including a considerable stretch of the Federated Malay States Government Railway, in Johore, whose boundaries immediately adjoin Singapore, but the Sultan remains very much lord and master of his own.

So, for that matter, do the sultans of the Federated States. We certainly administer law and order throughout their territories, and relieve them of much of the irksome routine of government, but their prestige is punctiliously maintained, and recent revisions of the Federal Constitution, in itself only thirty years old, tend to emphasise and define their independent sovereignty more clearly. They no longer sit, for instance, as heretofore, in the Federal Council at Kuala Lumpur, where their sovereign rank somewhat hindered their capability to take part in effective conference with the other Council members, namely the four British Residents and the seven unofficial members nominated by the High Commissioner with the approval of the King.

The Governor of the Straits Settlements is also High

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Commissioner of the Federated Malay States, whose senior British officer, the Chief Secretary, directs Federal affairs in the capacity of a Lieutenant-Governor whose authority is not absolutely supreme, but subordinate in the last resort to that of the High Commissioner.

. . . . . .

The *Golden Hind's* was the first British keel to furrow the Malacca Straits, waking by night the witch-fires of such phosphorescence as no other tropic seas can kindle. Drake and his men probably took little notice of this phenomenon. Grown blasé with wonders and enchantments, what they were on the look out for was presumably "refreshing," and it was poor fare they were reduced to hereabouts on which to keep themselves going, crabs at some tiny island without a name, "oysters growing on rocks, great whelks and some small fish which we took with our hooks," at Penang.

The highway to the East Indies thus won, however, was never to be closed down again. In 1600 Captain Sir James Lancaster, under orders of the newly-chartered East India Company, took out an expedition that established trading-posts at Acheen and Bantam in Sumatra, and brought back a letter and gifts from the Sultan to Queen Elizabeth. Many another convoy followed Lancaster's, trading-posts multiplied, and the Company's fifteen years' Charter was confirmed in perpetuity by James I.

But, from the first, Britain enjoyed no monopoly of this rich East Indian commerce. The Dutch and Portuguese had got there before them. There were squabbles about the "share-out"; eventually the English were ousted from the Eastern Archipelago, but upon the western mainland very successfully consolidated them-

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selves. British dominance in India grew out of quarrels over the swag in the far-off Spice Islands.

Our early rôle in these parts was not heroic. The Spaniards and Portuguese came to convert and conquer the heathen; ourselves and the Dutch as hucksters and bagmen, acquiring riches by the exploitation of heathen ignorance and credulity. Heaven helps those who help themselves, rather than such as spend all their time telling simple savages how to get there, was our motto.

These methods, so oddly in contrast, have brought about an equally curious aftermath. It is thirty years since Spain lost even the Philippines; the half of one island, Timor, is all that remains to the Portuguese of their East Indian Empire. Ourselves and the Dutch divide the rest. And it can be said with truth that our rule is a light, a just, and a beneficent one. This, the mildness of our governance, our rigid respect for native religion and customs, are carried on nowadays because such conduct seems right in our eyes for its own sake. But principle has grown out of expediency. We began by cultivating friendly relations with the natives because it paid to do so, while territorial acquisition and wholesale forcible conversions did not pay at all. It was only by degrees that the Dutch, and then ourselves, realised that security for trade was best obtainable by transforming the old-time factory on foreign soil into an accredited concession, and then into a carefully fortified settlement. We treated our heathen neighbours with courtesy and consideration because success in trade was dependent on their goodwill. By such time as the trading station had developed into a colony this mutual courtesy had become a habit.

In 1786 Captain Francis Light struck a bargain with the Sultan of Kedah. Captain Light was to occupy Penang Island so long as he helped keep off the Sultan's

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enemies on the mainland. But there was a difference of opinion about the terms of the lease. Four years later the Sultan tried hard to foreclose on his island, met with stubborn opposition, and eventually ceded it in perpetuity for six thousand dollars. Ten years later another slice of Kedah, now Province Wellesley, similarly changed hands for four thousand dollars, less than £500 in fact. In the year Nelson fell at Trafalgar, Penang became a presidency, thin end of the wedge of British ascendancy in Malaya.

Down south, Malacca had been occupied ten years earlier, and its old Dutch fort was destroyed in 1804. In 1818 we handed it back to the Dutch under the Treaty of Vienna, but reclaimed it six years later in exchange for the ancient British trading-post of Bengkulen, in Sumatra, established nearly two hundred years earlier.

Long since overshadowed by the later settlements of Penang and Singapore, Malacca remains to-day a backwater, a hushed and brooding place of ancient memories, centre though it is of a thriving agricultural zone.

But all the world knows or has heard of Singapore, founded on its island at the southern extremity of the Peninsula in 1819 by that great little man Sir Stamford Raffles, with the sealed and signified approval of the Temenggong of Johore. The Dutch marked immediately the threat to their own Malacca, and protested violently, but as themselves had lately "jumped" Riau, then under treaty with England, they were merely laughed at. In 1824 the *status quo* regarding Malacca and Singapore was ratified by an Anglo-Dutch Treaty, to which the Sultan of Johore was a consenting party. Singapore, as it was bound to do from its situation, became in a singularly short period the biggest port in the Eastern

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Archipelago and a strategic focus whose world-wide importance has become increasingly evident, and upon which the establishment of a British naval base now sets the seal.

Between 1826 and 1889, treaties with various sultans added to British Malaya the Pangkor and Sembilan Islands, Labuan, Cocos, and Christmas Island. Non-intervention with the inland sultanates of the Peninsula (though Penang had arranged a trade agreement with Perak as early as 1818) was our strict policy until 1873, when rivalry between Chinese mining factions in Perak made such interference in that State compulsory, and the sultanate came under our protection. The Chinese factions, however, continued their intrigues and strife, their quarrels growing so intense and sanguinary as to defy the feeble attempts of the Malay rulers (there being several pretenders to the sultanate at that time) to maintain peace and order in the State, throughout which anarchy threatened to overthrow all order, while beyond its confines Malay and British interests were both suffering.

Partly owing to his own impetuosity and ignorance the first British Resident, Mr. J. W. Birch, fell foul of both Malays and Chinese. Disaffected Malay chieftains plotted, successfully, to have him waylaid and murdered. Severe repressive measures had to be taken in consequence, but Mr. Birch's successor, Sir Hugh Low, quickly won the confidence of the Perak Malays, set the fortunes of the State on a sound footing, and really laid the foundations of such peace and prosperity as to-day distinguishes the whole Federation.

Civil war in Selangor brought about a similar intervention there in 1874, and further trouble that occurred almost simultaneously in Sungei Ujong and the adjoining districts, and continued up to the 'nineties, was even-

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tually concluded by the nine small states in this area being brought into confederation as a single unit, Negri Sembilan (Nine States), under the senior ruling prince, the Yam di per Tuan Besar.

Pahang, in the south-east of the Peninsula, the largest but also the wildest and most backward of all its principalities, in 1887 accepted a British agent, but in 1892 a number of turbulent chiefs revolted, and two years later launched from Trengganu and Kelantan an attack beyond their own borders, which was quelled by a small column under the command of a very young cadet, now Sir Hugh Clifford. Since then Pahang has witnessed no organised bloodshed, but remains, between the ramparts of its treacherous eastern coast and western bulwark of mountain and forest, the least developed and least known portion of the Peninsula whose inland capitals, Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh, stand almost within a stone's-throw of its boundaries.

. . . . . .

Should you wish to dive more deeply into early Peninsular lore, I recommend you to study Winstedt's *Malaya*, in which there is a fascinating chapter on the men who have made history in the country. You can read there of Alfonso D'Albuquerque, later Viceroy of India; of Camoens, the Shakespeare of Portugal, who "did his bit" as a private in the Portuguese armies of Malacca. And there was Francis Xavier the Good. When he landed in 1545, people came running, crying, "The Holy Father is here!" When the men-at-arms put away cards at his approach, he bade them play on, saying that soldiers need not behave like monks. He translated into Malay, "with great difficulty," the Creed, the General Confession, the Paternoster, Ave Maria, Salve Regina, the Ten Commandments. And

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you can read of great nineteenth-century Dutchmen like Van der Tuuk, founder of Malayan comparative philology. You will be glad to learn something of the greatest worthy of them all, Sir Stamford Raffles, at forty-five "a little old man, all yellow and blanched," broken in body and estate, but with a spirit still indomitable; and finally, if you are interested in them, as you well may be, of the Cliffords, Swettenhams, Maxwells, and all the Malayan supermen of our time.

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CHAPTER II

THE MALAYAN SCENE

PENANG, probably, will be your gateway to Malaya. A Bibby boat, if you have travelled that way, will perhaps have dropped you at Rangoon, where one may or may not catch the British India connection. The P. & O. liners miss this northern detour from Colombo, and the gain in speed and comfort is considerable. Having made Singapore your objective, a wider choice remains to you. The Japanese, the French, the Dutch lines, all have their points.

Penang should please you immensely. Most passenger liners make their landfall here in the early morning. If you have been wise enough to pack everything but your sponge-bag overnight, dawn, as she lifts her gauze curtains one by one, should find you watchful on deck, absorbing the panorama of mountain, sea, and palm-fronded shore gradually unfolded for you on either hand. To the north, Kedah Peak rises sheer for four thousand feet from the misty levels. Eastwards, half as high again, looms Gunong Bintang's mighty mass, arrayed beyond it along the land's vast granitic background a row of brother giants. Across the Sound, lights may be twinkling still high up on the Crag. Peering overboard your eye detects, emerging from the mist, certain ghostly objects which skate towards you over the glassy, mysterious tide like large, inquisitive water-beetles. These are sampans. A hail floats up from

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one right below your feet; eerie, hardly human. It is your lascar *serang* on the lower deck who answers. That contact breaks the spell.

There are worse ways of seeing Malaya than from a railway carriage window. If you want to, you can get into the train at Prai, which is the mainland terminus opposite Penang, and stay in it till it runs right into Tank Road Station at Singapore, over the new mile-long causeway linking the island with Johore. To make the whole five-hundred-miles' trip in daylight only means tumbling out for a night at Kuala Lumpur. You note Penang's anomaly, a very fine railway station (its clock-tower the most salient landmark in the island), without a railway, where you take your ticket and pass through, not to a platform but to a jetty, whence Government launches ply back and forth to Butterworth and Prai, half an hour's steaming across the channel. Motto, don't over-tip the railway porters, or anyone else who renders you menial services in this country. Only modest expectations, if any, as to that kind of thing, will be cherished by most of the underlings of any race with whom you will come in contact, and till a very few years ago "No Gratuities" was an unwritten law observed by all European residents and thoroughly understood and accepted by the humbler grades of Asiatic employees, their attitude providing a pleasant change after your Indian and Ceylon experiences perhaps.

. . . . . .

Blue-green trees in the foreground, their trunks mossy with epiphytes almost to the roots, blue-green mountains on the horizon, rolling, hump-backed, and wooded for the most part, with the sharper apex of some rocky peak soaring here and there far above the tree-line.

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Between the granite ranges, the queerest cubes and chunks of limestone jutting from the levels, terrestrial islands of perpendicular cliff, two thousand feet high sometimes, capped with high-grown forest that looks as inaccessible as Jack's Beanstalk kingdom, though usually some rift or breakaway in the rock makes them climbable.

Such will be your abiding memory of the Malayan scene. Rivers there are, if you could only see them, the Pahang and Perak, streams bigger than the Thames, both with a host of tributaries not yet fully mapped. "Children" of the parent river the Malays call them, and from their earliest settlement have propped their stilted *kampongs* beside the jungle waterways. Till we came, and notwithstanding the rapids, these were the only roads they knew.

I maintain that the predominant note in Malayan foliage is blue, though sylviculturists assert that some of our trees at the change of leaf put forth that true green which is nature's great rarity. Yet bright reds and coppers give variety in the crown of verdure, as does the wintering rubber in cultivated zones. You have, though, to view it by boat from one of the larger rivers, from rare clearings on the high hills, or to fly over it, to get a proper idea of Malayan forest scenery. I did that one day with Chanteloup ("Can't 'e Loop!" of pre-war meets at Hendon), and from the cockpit of his tiny Caudron we gazed down at Selangor's verdant *bukits*, and saw them like green sponges in some marine aquarium.

Afoot in the forest, you must keep to existing jungle paths or get your Malays to hack one for you as you go with their *parangs*, and in either case your view is extraordinarily limited. Tropical countries that have a prolonged dry season will produce a denser jungle,

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though in this impervious-seeming tangle you find that hard to believe.

Malaya has some five thousand floral species, of which a solid third (a greater number than that provided by all British India and Burma) are real trees. Botanists declare this a very high average. What is even more remarkable, half these species are indigenous to this relatively tiny corner of Asia. The Dipterocarps, a typically Indo-Malayan group family, furnish most of the larger growths. The universal epiphytes include not only orchids, aroids, and ferns of the most varied outline and dimensions, but woody parasitic species, comprising creeping rhododendrons and the typically Malayan *rotans*, climbing plants whose rope-like stems are everywhere festooned, grappled to branch and trunk by leaves whose prolonged tips are armed with wickedly barbed spines. Parasitic figs display their characteristic leaf patterns. Almost ubiquitous, and toughest obstacle of all to your passage, are the spiny clumps of *bertam*, a low-growing palm. The erect and more graceful genera of palms exist in many forms, but are less in evidence. Tree-ferns abound at higher altitudes, and in some districts bamboos.

Low-growing, herbaceous plants are few, but sometimes, especially in the cool hill jungles like those surrounding Bukit Fraser, they occur in exceptionally beautiful forms, though few will respond to attempts at cultivation.

Malaya's western coast is fringed with mangroves, rooted in mud and slime, home of the estuarine crocodile, uncouth crabs, and a bright red crayfish that looks as if it had already been boiled. The mangroves, especially the *bakau* variety, yield a valuable firewood supply. Our eastern shore is belted with the rustling casuarinas, a coniferous sand-abiding tree with quite a

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THE MALAYAN JUNGLE

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European look about it. Where Selangor's seaward border does provide sand, at Port Dickson and Morib, the casuarina crops up again.

. . . . . .

Tin-mining has scored its mark upon the Malayan landscape, over thousands of acres where trial has shown the land to be stanniferous. The Kinta valley in Perak is honeycombed with mines old and new. At night, with all its activities functioning over miles of country under the glare of sizzling arc-lamps, this valley is a wonderful sight. Working like ants, Chinese labourers have literally moved mountains, particle by particle. Huge stagnant meres, from one to two hundred feet deep sometimes, mark the site of their bygone endeavours; in new areas or those not yet exhausted the scarred face of the earth is grotesquely patterned with the weird appliances of mining, box-pumps, sluices, aqueducts, and what not, of a crazy and gim-crack appearance, yet perfectly adapted to their intended purpose. There are deep lode mines in Pahang where Cornish methods are followed 1600 feet below the surface; in the alluvial areas (spreading these days from Kuala Lumpur down to Klang) huge bucket dredges paddle back and forth in duck-ponds hardly big enough to accommodate them.

In the rubber country, sublime and baroque effects are alike left behind. All is dull, dank, and monotonous, though nowadays proprietors and agents have passed the stage when it was thought seemly for planters to grow rubber-trees in orderly rows right up to their own windows. Bungalows in these days are sited to the inmates' best advantage from every point of view, and nestle amid spacious compounds that are usually made to blossom like the rose. Illimitable miles of rubber

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grown to order, however, afford a frankly depressing spectacle, relieved only by the autumnal effects of "wintering" in its due season. And the more these effects are apparent, the more keen planters shake their heads over their bonus prospects, such æsthetically pleasing symptoms being the gauge of a dwindling flow of latex.

. . . . . .

There is a chance that the exigencies of your employment in Malaya may deposit you after arrival in the *ulu*, otherwise the real primeval backwoods, but this is not very likely unless some rather out-of-the-way kind of job absorbs you. Pioneer railwaymen, certain surveyors and P.W.D. engineers, and naturally forest officers, can hardly count on putting in their prentice work in Malaya under very civilised conditions. It should not shock them to be required to sleep in tents, sometimes, to be bitten by mosquitoes, and worse.

Ordinary people, mercantile and professional employees certainly, most civil servants, and even the majority of planting and mining men, will find that ownership of a car or motor-bicycle links them with a metropolis of sorts. Actually, if duty establishes you in Singapore, you can encourage yourself with the fact that your fellow-citizens are now so numerous that nobody knows everybody else, or tries to, but there will certainly be one and perhaps many circles where you will be welcomed by people who share all your pet hobbies and aversions.

There is nothing characteristically Malayan about Singapore. A huge, bustling, cosmopolitan port, much as you expected to find it if you are familiar with tropical seafaring. Not that a seaward introduction will fail to impress you, for here again the early morning

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scene is exquisite as you approach through narrows of jade-green water, the wash of your ship splashing high over the red rocks of either shore, while above little flagstaffed houses wink a welcome at you from the verdant bluffs of islands large and small. Shoreward, the port's mile length of wharves, beyond them the huge mercantile buildings of Collyer Quay, are the bulwarks of no mean city. Mammoth structures of an imposing stateliness abound, Fullerton Building and the new university, the older town hall and cathedral, hotels of a Babylonian opulence, "Raffles's," the "Europe," and the rest. Landing, you perceive these architectural Colossi to be hemmed about with street upon street of Chinese shop-houses and tenements, whose fecund life and swarming activities seem somehow unhuman, and give you the feeling of having blundered into an ants' nest.

What strikes you as odd is that you will see no Malays about in this their country's capital, except a *sais* or two lounging by his master's car.

Churches and schools, secular and denominational, seem scattered through every quarter of the city, and the many hospitals provide a grim reminder that Singapore is the Bethesda of Malayan invalids. The brand-new blocks of the General Hospital are indeed splendidly equipped, and the very best of surgical and nursing skill is at your service if it should prove your misfortune to require the same. I have good authority for that testimony. People were very kind to me for two months in Singapore Hospital once. Perhaps my memories of the place are rather jaundiced by circumstance, but I certainly never wanted to go on living there.

Yet many Europeans think differently. They say the place amuses them. That is possible enough, with goodness knows how many clubs, golf, tennis, cricket, football, yachting, rowing, swimming, and polo

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facilities, new faces every mail-day in the "Europe" and "Raffles's" ball-rooms, and old up-country friends always turning up for or from their leave.

I believe my real grievance is that I like to sleep under a blanket.

This reference invites a comparison, and leads me naturally to speak of the Federal capital, which is Kuala Lumpur, where Nature maintains the nocturnal blanket in request. On first retiring, you won't wish to be bothered with the thing at all. Your "Dutch wife" (coy custom has thus labelled the elongated bolster that is your inseparable bed-fellow in these latitudes) suffices for comfort. Old stagers, however, will have trained themselves to fumble, about 3 a.m., with a prehensile toe, and the draping of the light blanket across your diaphragm is performed subconsciously. Here the morning mists are chilly.

Other good reasons are not far to seek for so many people preferring life in the F.M.S. capital to existence in all other locations in the Peninsula. It has everything that Singapore and Penang can give except a superfluity of population, which we can dispense with, and seaside amenities, that an hour's motoring will bring within our reach if the irresistible urge seizes us to enjoy them. Beside the attractions of "K.L.," as we know ourselves and are known, those of Seremban and Taiping are poky and parochial. Ipoh? It is funny how everybody else smiles when its denizens descant upon Ipoh. Ipoh is the sort of place that is always nursing its grievances, and squirming about the jokes woven round it in other local papers.

Perhaps Kuala Lumpur is a little parochial too, the segregation of so many heads of departments and business firms, *and* their families, providing a natural forcing-house of mutual admiration. But at least Kuala

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Lumpur's situation is delightful. Mostly, its residential suburbs are grouped on picturesque wooded hills or *bukits* that look down on the elegant minarets of the Federal Government offices, the adjacent mosque, and the railway buildings along the Damansara Road. Two rivers divide the town, and have taken, in recent years, round about Christmas time, to submerging large portions of it, bringing down anathema on the heads of Government and the tin-miners, who share the responsibility. (They have worse floods, by the way, at Ipoh.) Below the beautiful Lake Gardens the *padang* spreads a mat of cool emerald, overhung by large and umbrageous trees and flanked on one side by the most alluring of Oriental caravanserais, the "Spotted Dog," or "Dog" *tout court*, by which title alone are its members wont to refer among themselves to the State Club of Selangor.

Singapore is a hundred years old, Kuala Lumpur forty or so, Penang older than either, yet the air of all is equally modern, as one understands such things in the East.

Malacca is different, a Sleepy Hollow still, despite its revived importance as a rubber depot, drowsing on old memories that were history when Singapore was a fishing village on stilts. Suitably enough, it was while gazing on the Malaccan scene, I believe, that an emotional lady traveller coined, somewhere back in the Victorian 'sixties, the "always afternoon" tag that has stuck to Malaya ever since. It is quite correct, if sentimental, like so many classic utterances of that epoch.

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CHAPTER III

THE RACES OF MALAYA

Malays—Indians—Chinese—Eurasians—Others

WHEN you take your first *makan angin*, otherwise "eat the air," or walk abroad in Malaya, the cool late afternoon breezes will be rustling the areca-fronds by the wayside, and others besides yourself be drawn out to enjoy them.

Particularly the Malay youths, with whose debonair bearing you will be struck, as they saunter past you along the road in twos and threes, with linked hands perhaps, immaculate in their clean *bajus* and *sarongs*, their pork-pie hats cocked at a sportive angle. They flirt Malacca canes, toy perhaps with a cheroot, returning a level answer to your gaze, perhaps a half-smile. But they don't stare, knowing it to be rude. There are no hobbledehoys among these people.

"I rather like them," said my fellow-passenger, "but they do walk along the road as if they owned it, don't they?"

"Well," I reminded her. "Don't they?"

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And she supposed that, after all, they did.

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"Rather liking" these cheerful folk is easy. There must be something the matter with a European who can live among Malays for a year and not develop a real affection for them.

At first glance you wouldn't call the average Malay good-looking. His high cheek-bones and slightly prognathous jaw betray the Mongol strain in his composite ancestry, accented sometimes by eyes noticeably almond-shaped or oblique. Usually impassive, his air may even be morose. But sight of his friends, of whom you may soon be one, or any occurrence that titillates his enormous sense of humour, will produce a smile that the whiteness of his superb teeth renders positively dazzling. Other physical features of his will engage your admiration if you study him carefully, his well-knit if stocky frame, the delicate moulding of his small hands and feet.

They call him indolent, but who wouldn't be in such a climate? One can't be civilised without reserving to oneself a certain modicum of leisure, and in his own way the Malay is very civilised. He thinks "hustle" bad form, which of course it is. A country of moist equatorial heat, of malaria, of crops easily grown and harvested, where Islam inculcates a serene fatalism, and a tradition of sumptuary laws still discourages luxurious and expensive habits among the common folk, have all been reins upon the Malay's material ambitions.

He feels himself all right, thank you, as he is. Staunch in his faith, though no religious fanatic, he preserves his poise in a new, cosmopolitan, and rather vulgar world, sustained against the pinpricks of circumstance

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by pride in his race and breeding. He takes things as they come, and the advent of the European into his scheme of affairs has not thrown him off his balance. In his way he has adapted himself to new conditions, and acquiesces sensibly in European notions for the betterment of his country and kin. He will give long if not everlastingly loyal service to a European employer who wins his respect, but "servility" is alien to his nature. For all foreign races who are not Europeans he has a lofty contempt, and scarcely troubles to conceal it.

Praise and encouragement expand his bonhomie like a flower, insult or injustice he will resent deeply, but not with open or violent protest unless the provocation is excessive. In hot youth an exigent and ardent lover, age finds him still a thoughtful and considerate, even deferential, spouse. Observing his family life, you may think he spoils his children with kindness and indulgence, but it is not so. Malay boys and girls, though never taught to remain "seen and not heard," display the best of manners towards their elders both at home and abroad, and take pride in rendering their parents respect and consideration all the days of their life.

I have included of purpose in a later chapter a Malayan folk-story in which this trait is well exhibited.

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There is one Malay word that has a world-wide currency. Nobody requires to be told what "running *amok*" means. The worst case in recent times took place in 1924, when a deck passenger on one of the Straits Steamship boats that daily traverse the Penang-Port Swettenham-Singapore route went *amok* shortly after the vessel left Singapore, killing thirteen people including the European captain, and wounding others before he

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A Malay Kampong

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was shot down. Inquiry revealed him as a Sumatran, and not a Peninsular Malay.

More interesting than the *amok* condition, at least to psychologists, is the predisposition in many Malays to become *latah* (hypnotised, entranced) on being spoken to sharply. People normally quite clear-headed and sophisticated, non-commissioned police officers for example, are sometimes subject to these queer attacks, during which the victim responds unconsciously to any stimulus, and will without hesitating obey the most absurd command. He will bark like a dog or crow like a cock, without any recollection of having done so on regaining natural consciousness. Instances of *latah* are fairly frequent, if seldom referred to or embroidered upon by travellers. But though fiction writers have made and continue to make lurid copy out of real or imagined *amoks*, these berserk seizures, though they still occur, are uncommon among Peninsular Malays to-day, and when they do take place usually have less tragic consequences than formerly. Our own law has for years prohibited the carrying of the *kris* in British or protected territory, with obvious advantages to public peace and order.

These curious and characteristic weapons (depicted in more than one of the decorations appearing in this volume) are still peddled by Malayan and Javanese curio-mongers, and are popular with collectors of bric-à-brac, for whose tastes the rather limited range of Malayan arts and crafts does not offer a very wide choice. What indigenous work of this kind survives is represented by basketry (the Malay is an expert at the rapid fabrication of the *rotan* chairs often seen in the home market), bamboo musical

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instruments, woven *sarongs* (in which the Kelantan craftsmen and their womenfolk particularly excel), and wrought and damascened metal work. This last always betrays Indian influence, but the ornament is usually bolder and more simplified.

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Evidence of the casual regard paid by Malays of a former generation to the sanctity of human life and property, particularly when it happened to be Chinese, is provided by the recorded existence, up to forty years or so ago, of the gruesome form of outdoor recreation known as *mein china* (the Chinese game). A solitary Chinese miner, silk-pedlar, or other vagrant encountered on the roads, was considered fair sport for such Malay braves as happened to come up with him in a lonely spot. The idea was for players, on detecting a likely victim, to bet among themselves upon the amount of *wang* the unfortunate Chinaman's wallet might contain. The *kris* then settled the Chinaman's account, investigation of his purse the question of his executor's identity.

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Mostly, you must look for the Malay outside the city boundaries. His active pursuits are mainly agricultural; he likes to have trees about his *kampong*, and running water if it is available, since the rivers were the only highways his forefathers knew. He views with disdain the swarming termite colonies established by the Chinese in every Peninsular town. Let them fall over each other in their squalid tenements and shop-houses, since they seem to like it. But the country life for him.

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The Malay is remarkable for a quite noteworthy wit

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and subtlety exhibited in conversation. He appears to possess a naturally literary and allusive mind. He has needed no stimulus from his protectors to produce a distinctive, if fragmentary, literature. It seems thus the more pity that some natural disability should hamper him almost invariably in translating this nimbleness of mind into oratorical expression. Unlike his Indian neighbours, even the "literate" Malay is averse from putting pen to paper, from raising his voice in debate, although educated Malays of the highest character and antecedents sit on various public bodies in the Peninsula.

The Indian errs, sometimes almost blatantly, in the other direction. He is too articulate, less vocal than vociferous. The art of condensation is apparently beyond his mastery. Call him a windbag if you will, he is certainly a spouter, a tub-thumper. It is not that the secret of brevity is ultimately beyond the Indian's mastery. With him it is a case of *solvitur ambulando*, of practice making perfect, sometimes. It is natural to him to be florid in speech, and within the rigorous confines of our Western English he walks, at first, stumblingly.

Indian Nationalist orators, in Malaya and elsewhere, frequently adjure their hearers to "go into the villages, stand in the shade of the trees, there collect and educate the people," and thereafter continue to agitate for their own papers, presses, and platforms. These things will come in time. I have seen them arrive and develop in other places. No one knows better what a lot of arrant nonsense will then be talked and written. But out of that nonsense I believe that truth and good sense will ultimately emerge.

By talking, by writing, even by talking and writing flapdoodle, people become fitted to talk and to write, just as they become fitted to take part in public life by

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being given opportunities of participating in it. I do not anticipate any local development in Malaya of the baser side of "Swaraj," the country's Indian populations being already sufficiently leavened with men of sense and judgment not to foster the growth of lie-factories such as here and there pollute the name of journalism on the Indian mainland, and even the more hare-brained sections well aware that the Peninsula is in no sense of the word "their" country, so that as Romans by adoption it behoves them to comport themselves as Romans do.

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Indians form one-seventh, which is to say, half a million, of British Malaya's total population. Most are Tamils, three-quarters of their number coolies on rubber estates or in the P.W.D., the railway, and so forth, and nearly all the rest clerks in Government or commercial offices, a vocation they share with English-speaking Chinese. Certain Moslem Indians have intermarried with the Malays of Penang and other places, as in parts of Pahang the Arabs have done for centuries, and there are some Malays who can truthfully claim Sayid ancestry (the blood of the Prophet).

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Malaya's most affluent citizens are not the Malays, nor are they the Europeans. The really solid people in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Ipoh (at Singapore perhaps a few Arabs and Jews pile up greater riches), are practically all Chinese. Your Towkay—any Chinese rich or influential enough to employ other Chinese to work for him acquires this courtesy title—has his own peculiar method of accumulating dollars without hustle, being temperamentally the oddest mixture, at the same

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time conservative and enterprising, reckless and thrifty. But his natural bias is towards industry, and any Chinese working for himself seems perfectly happy to labour twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four, without Sundays or holidays, barring a few days at the Chinese New Year in February, and even then he cannot really enjoy himself at that festival unless upon the eve of it he knows himself to be completely free from debt. He cannot conceive of business life, or any other sort of life, being conducted without graft or "squeeze," yet his commercial morality in general, viewed by Occidental standards, is something to admire.

His overt and covert philanthropies are extensive, and not as a rule ordered with an eye to their publicity value. In private, as a family man, he combines the highest domestic virtues with incorrigible libertine inclinations, which the customs of his country render easily and more or less legitimately satisfiable. Or one would have thought so. But just as at home our stipendiary magistrates had regularly at one time to deal with a recurring crop of "drunks" after Bank Holidays, court calendars in Malaya during the week or two after Chinese New Year were until recently largely devoted to that class of offences which in England would come under the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Mostly, these cases ended in acquittals. Jurists agree on the considerable difficulty of defining this species of misdemeanour, and the greater one of proving it.

It may seem dreadful, but it is a fact, that the few belongings of his own the poorer class of Chinaman will not part with for cash do not include his daughters, and though the law as we administer it has sought to establish an age of consent, the usual Oriental difficulties combine to invalidate its functioning. When one knows how economic necessity drives and has always driven

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the Chinese in his own country to disencumber himself of surplus female offspring by means which appal the Western observer, it is surprising that any Chinese girl children except the daughters of the rich should ever find much of heaven lying about them in their infancy.

They do, however, and look as if they did. From the crawling stage upwards, they appear to enjoy life vastly, and though the traditional impassivity of the race not seldom masks the countenances of their young brothers, their own more frequently than not are wreathed in smiles, if never very broad ones. They are not, I dare say, given to romping or the more boisterous gambols of European children, nor do they reveal the Malayan or Indian infant's air of never having been scolded for wrongdoing in its young life. They just look, in a demure sort of way, as if they had nothing to worry about.

If they do lack anything, it is not anything to eat. No one in Malaya has ever seen a thin Chinese girl. In the flapper stage they are the sleekest little creatures, and with their delicately-curved ivory cheeks, magnolia eyelids with the Mongol tilt at the corners, exquisite hands and wrists, necks like lily stalks, and ebon pigtails of incredible length, they brighten up the Malayan streets like flowers in their gregarious journeyings to and from school. Unfortunately, however, they lack grace of carriage below the waistline. Are these short legs and clumsy hips, this pitiful waddle of a walk, the legacies of a hundred generations of crippled ancestresses? Have you, O reader, ever seen an authentic, old-fashioned, Chinese woman's shoe, a dreadful object, literally about the size of a match-box? And is there hope, now this torture is abolished, for the Chinese girl of the future to develop the femur and tibia of an Atalanta?

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Should Chinese girls in the Peninsula bob their hair or not? was the problem due to be debated by the members of a Singapore club when I was there, but I missed the result of the vote. The only proper answer, of course, is that they shouldn't. At present the Chinese damsel on her way to school is one of the most pleasing phenomena of our streets. She has usually a quaintly decorative quality that unaccustomed European eyes find most piquant and attractive. This attraction is twofold, its inspiration being, firstly trousers, secondly pigtail. It is odd that Eton-cropped European maidens parading the streets in plus fours should look all wrong, while to the discerning eye the conventional uniform of Chinese girlhood appears eminently right.

And how her shingled European sisters envy, in their heart of hearts, those glorious black braids! At Brighton boarding-schools the percentage of inmates who could, even before the vogue of shorn tresses, sit on the bows of their pigtails, was very low indeed, against which I have observed Chinese demoiselles who could all but stand on theirs. Let not the sisterhood wantonly relinquish this, their crowning glory, through any ill-advised anxiety to maintain touch with Western fashions.

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If you expect to meet many evidences of decorative taste inside the houses of the rich Chinese in Malaya you will be disappointed. Connoisseurs were never, probably, among his forbears (immigrant coolies they were, almost to a certainty, but there are no stigmata of the European *nouveau riche* among these third-generation grandees except this single failing). Partly, fashion may be responsible, for I am told even the rabid anti-English Nationalist in China nowadays tolerates no stick of furniture in his house that would strike an

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exotic note on the pavement of Tottenham Court Road, a prejudice that very likely started sixteen years ago, when all things good and old fell out of favour as "stinking Manchu stuff."

Most of them, of course, still own and use imported Chinese furniture, household implements and ornaments to a Western eye curious, if not beautiful. Not all Chinese work is beautiful by any manner of means. But the lacquered coffers and ponderous blackwood chairs (I have seen hideously ugly ones with yellow marble seats) are interspersed with pianolas and gramophone cabinets in mahogany and walnut, the silk wall panels alternate with oleographs and Christmas Number supplements, Ming jars and hardstone tortoises jostle "souvenir" shaving-mugs, cuckoo-clocks, and "bathing beauties" in tinted plaster of Paris.

Any Chinese who has the money to pay for it falls for a "novelty" in the bric-à-brac line, a clockwork canary that sings, a brass bedstead with mother-of-pearl knobs on, or a shiny, new grandfather clock with Westminster chimes. I knew one very opulent Towkay who offered nearly a thousand pounds of our money for a real talking parrot, sick of the hundred-dollar ones that were supposed to and wouldn't, or not so that he could understand them. A quite famous compatriot of his, we will call him Ly Chee Kong, allows an English inventor a retainer of hundreds per annum, with ultimate hopes of a huge bonus, so long as he experiments unremittingly with an electric motor-horn that shall, when perfected, as the owner's Sunbeam shoulders meaner traffic from its path, *say* "Ly Chee Kong" very loud and clear whenever he presses the button. It might be done. Easier than Marjoribanks or Cholmondeley. And did not somebody tell me the author of *The Green Hat* drove his Rolls-Royce up to

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Manchester for registration—the only way to get his own initials on the number plate?

People like this make it easy for enterprising shopkeepers who keep their buying agents in Belgium and Czecho-Slovakia busy, to make fabulous profits. They have one of those Arts and Crafts Exhibitions in Kuala Lumpur every year now, their object, frankly and intensely, uplift. Excellent institutions in their way, and well thought out and organised. And the stalls that take all the money are the ones where you buy clockwork canaries and loose diamonds.

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Records of European history in Singapore are admittedly scanty, but those of the Chinese are scantier still, and the exploring of family lore among the ramifications of five generations (in not a few cases) was a task calling for extraordinary patience and care. Obviously no European could have compassed it. There is no doubt, however, but that Mr. Song Ong Siang's *A Hundred Years of the Chinese in Singapore*, an unassuming chronicle of the part played by the writer's community in the development of their city of adoption, has proved a labour of love. Local activities of secret societies, for instance, discussion of which is so much in the air at the moment, are, it appears, almost if not quite as old as Singapore. Though they first came to public notice in 1830, it is quite conceivable, Mr. Ong Siang admits, "that the very earliest immigrants there were some members of the Triad Society (or 'Thian-ti-hui') as political refugees," and, according to Mr. J. D. Vaughan (*Manners and Customs of the Chinese*), it is said that "some Europeans, on the first settlement of Singapore, who lived far away from the town beyond the protection of the police, joined the Society for protection."

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Among the long list of eminent compatriots of his who have figured prominently in Chinese society during the succeeding decades into which his chronicle is divided, Mr. Ong Siang introduces us to not a few quaint and amusing characters. There is Mr. Loo Kway Soo, a most versatile gentleman, by turns artist, actor, and student of medicine, one of whose accomplishments was "a clever imitation of Sandow (who had visited here a few months before) in his physical culture exhibition. He was dressed in tights, with 'faked muscles,' and a costume of leopard skin, with moustache and get-up like the famous strong man. On a curtain being parted he was revealed standing on a revolving pedestal and exhibiting his wonderful muscles and chest expansion. He also lifted a 'huge weight,' and gave an amusing talk on physical culture."

A self-made artist and popular limner of portraits and designer of stage scenery, Mr. Kway Soo "expresses regret that he was born in a generation when his conceptions of art cannot be freely and fully displayed, as

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his customers cannot appreciate them. Against his will and to please his customers, he has to produce pictures which do not satisfy his artistic soul but which are marketable." If only Mr. Kway Soo knew how many Occidental geniuses make similar compromises with their conscience every day under the same sort of economic pressure, how much would his artistic soul be comforted!

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It is open to a Straits-born Chinese in Singapore to acquire the status usually recognised by "naturalisation" in the Settlement. In the Federated Malay States things are rather different. As is the case with the Indian and other immigrants, Chinese who presumably still hold rights of citizenship in their own republic are debarred from the full privileges accorded to subjects of the Sultan of that state in which they reside. Time may possibly bring changes in this and similar respects. For the present what rights they have certainly include that of interesting themselves, even if not actually participating, in public affairs in the country of their adoption. Their inclusion, for instance, on advisory boards, has already enabled members of their community to render very great public service, which will no doubt tend to be of an even more extensive character as time goes on.

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The Governor of Hong-Kong, Sir Cecil Clementi, lately delivered an address to the European business community of that city, setting forth the advantages likely to accrue to all concerned from the establishment of a social club in Hong-Kong open to both Europeans and Chinese, and it was actually a Chinese correspondent

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of an English newspaper who suggested that Malaya might take up the idea, affording educated Chinese and Europeans better opportunities of getting to know each other. He claimed, indeed, that "Concord Clubs ought to be started wherever the governors and the governed are of different races."

On this latter suggestion one can hardly go all the way with this enthusiastic gentleman. Not the millennium itself can be counted on to see certain backward races who, in the best fashion they are capable of, conduct themselves as loyal subjects of the King, acquiring such superficial graces as will enable them to share the amenities even of a "Concord" Club with those Providence has set to govern them, at least without considerable mutual embarrassment. Except perhaps in the orchestra, a Hottentot, even with trousers on, would find it difficult to maintain a proper social equipoise while attending a *thé dansant*, and would in all probability neither be happy himself nor feel that his presence was making others so, while supposing that he ventured no farther than the bar, his country manners there displayed might prejudice fellow-clubmen in his disfavour.

But with the spirit underlying this proposal, which is that at all times and in all places it behoves both governors and governed to work for a better understanding of each other, striving by all sympathetic and considerate means available to get under each other's skins so to speak, one can be heartily in agreement. When the "governed" are of such race, Asiatic or otherwise, as may rightly claim (like the Chinese) to have attained along their own lines to a high degree of civilisation and culture, or (as in the case of the Malays) without overmuch book-learning or even "culture" in the accepted sense, have developed

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national qualities of character and temperament that, notwithstanding certain amiable weaknesses, stamp their possessors as sportsmen and gentlemen, such a mutually supported institution as a "Concord" Club becomes not only a theoretically admirable notion, but an entirely practical one.

English people find great difficulty in mastering the Chinese language, or even one of the many dialects thereof. But perseverance gets over that obstacle. It is probably equally difficult for the Chinese to learn English, yet many of them do so even as adults, while in these days thousands acquire a knowledge of it in the schools. And granted that in such a place as Hong-Kong the language question must always remain a stumbling-block, we in Malaya are fortunate in having things made easier for both of us, the Malay language, an at least elementary mastery of which is easily attainable by almost any foreigner in the country, providing a lingua franca that makes ordinary social exchanges possible with any chance-comer likely to be encountered. And Malaya is fortunate in further respects than the possession of this easily acquired means of verbal communication. As our Chinese friend observes, here "the relations existing between the various races are a model for many less fortunate countries." With experience of not a few such, I can say that is profoundly true.

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Naturally, for two hundred years Malaya's population has included a Eurasian community. In theory, we English do not approve of miscegenation, or concede to its human results a footing of complete social equality. Actually, however, there is no individual man or woman among what we call European "society" in Malaya who does not share friendship, acquaintance, or club fellow-

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ship with people whom the world is universally cognisant are not "persons of pure European descent on both sides," and do not claim to be such. But there are Eurasians and Eurasians, and on their merits there are many families not of absolutely unmixed European descent who have won, *honoris causa*, a European status that only a fool or an idiot would call in question. They have been found, and probably always will be found, in the most exalted ranks of Government service, the professions, and business and social circles generally. Dozens of such people are, literally, "received at Court" without a shadow of demur on anybody's part.

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The Mohammedan Malays are not the aboriginal inhabitants of the Peninsula. It is by no means certain where their primitive forefathers came from, though on linguistic grounds it is likely this was the tract of country between India and China. But when they did penetrate what is now British Malaya it was via their already established foothold at Palembang and Minangkabau in Sumatra. Already in possession of the country, though very sparsely populating it, they found, in the north, the brachycephalic Negrito or Semang, a dark, frizzy-haired people allied to the Aetas of the Philippines and the Mincopies of the Andamans, and in the south the fairer, wavy-haired, and dolichocephalic Sakai, likewise the Besisi, who have linguistic Mon-Khmer affinities and may also have come down from Indo-China, but physically resemble the Toalas of Celebes and the famous Veddas of Ceylon. These Sakai exhibit wonderful skill with the blowpipe, a weapon in the use of which they have been imitated by the Semang, but never by the Malays.

There are about two thousand Semang in existence

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to-day, and perhaps twenty thousand Sakai (though their proneness to intermarry with other races makes the dividing line difficult to draw), and a thousand or so Besisi. There are also the Jakuns, a breed of more or less aboriginal Malays found in Negri Sembilan and Johore.

But unless you spend a good deal of time in field anthropology or exploring, or happen by chance upon some scattered forest colony of these people in your big-game shooting expeditions, you are unlikely ever to set eyes on a Semang or even a Sakai. The nearest approach to civilisation where a settlement of these last can probably be located nowadays is at Dusun Tua, the scene of weekend "rafting" picnics some twenty miles from Kuala Lumpur. But ninety-nine per cent of the Europeans in Kuala Lumpur have no suspicion of its existence.

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CHAPTER IV

MALAY LEGENDS AND FOLK-LORE

A MOST interesting correspondence in the London newspapers has lately exposed the need for our colonial administrators of the future being given at least a grounding in ethnological subjects before they take up their duties among the various backward races of our Empire. Serious misunderstandings of the people with whom the student will have to deal, and possibly very tragic occurrences, even widespread disturbances, accruing therefrom, may that way be avoided. Quite apart from the lack of academic facilities at Home, it is complained that hardly any Colonial Government affords reasonable opportunity or encouragement for such studies by its serving officials who may have grasped the need for them thoroughly, and be most anxious to increase their efficiency by devotion to serious ethnographical research.

On this point, however, Malaya is the colony that has perhaps least to reproach herself with. To take philology alone, the leading Malay scholars of their time have always been found in the country's European official ranks. Skeat, Wilkinson, and Winstedt, names in the very forefront of this branch of study, were all Government servants, Dr. Winstedt indeed being still in active harness. The labours of Mr. I. H. N. Evans, of the Museums and Ethnographical Department, have been continuous and fruitful in recent years, and he is already a famous person among anthropologists all over the world.

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One rather wonders what the circulation figures of an official publication such as the *Journal* of the Federated Malay States Museums may be among ordinary private residents in Malaya. A couple of hundred, perhaps, yet how much more interesting it is than the *Straits Times*! Writing with a stray number of the *Journal* before me, I find that more than three-fourths of its varied contributions appear above the signature of the indefatigable Mr. Evans.

An account of Negrito customs describes a magical séance arranged for Mr. Evans's benefit, at which many "Chinoi" (messengers of the god Tapern) possessed in turn the Negrito medium Mempelam, who acted as their mouthpiece for weird and fragmentary snatches of song. Male and female Chinoi perform in turn, the one human touch among their efforts quoted being the protest of a female Chinoi: "How shall we hold a magical performance, if I have no head-dress?"

Mempelam said that a large snake—the Mat Chinoi —lives on the road to Tapern's house on a piece of carefully smoothed ground. The snake is two fathoms long and ten cubits in circumference, and makes long, many-layered mats for Tapern. Some, ornamented with beautiful patterns, it hangs over a cross-beam, and it is under the shelter of these that it lives. Inside the snake are twenty or thirty female Chinoi of great beauty, and also beautiful combs, head-dresses, and so forth.

There is a male Chinoi called Halak Gihmal, who lives on the back of the snake, and looks after the clothes and ornaments which are stored inside it. If a male Chinoi asks to go into the snake, Halak Gihmal tells him to make trial of the mats first. There are seven of these mats, hanging over a beam above the snake, and these are always opening and closing. When the male

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Chinoi tries to pass along the passage under them, they close on him, so that, unless he runs very quickly, he gets caught. If he manages to get through the mats safely he is told to enter a tobacco-box, the lid of which opens and closes rapidly. If he is lucky enough to make a safe entrance and escape—he leaves by another way—he is allowed to choose one of the female Chinoi who live in the snake for himself.

Then there is the charming tale of Piagok and Tanggoi, once earthly lovers, but now divinities in the Negrito heaven.

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Piagok dreamt that he met a woman. So on the next morning he set out and really did meet her. She told Piagok that she wanted armlets (of *rotan*), Jews' harps and combs. Piagok went home and made the combs; and on the next day he told his mother to go to the woman's camp, and at night he went there himself and married Yak Tanggoi—for that was the woman's name. The next morning he went with Homoit, Tanggoi's younger brother, to hunt with his blowpipe, and when it was night they went home. Homoit was carried tied on Piagok's back, above his back-basket, because his waist was only as big as my index finger and he could not walk: on returning to the hut, his sister released him. On the day after, Piagok went by himself through the jungle to Perak (i.e. the Perak River Valley) for five days, and then came back. On his return, he went away again on the next morning and shot a pig with his bow. He returned, and that night he had an unlucky dream. The next morning he and Yak Tanggoi exchanged leaves of the *Changlun*, agreeing that if their leaves withered they also would be dead. Then Piagok went on a journey and he found when he looked at his (Yak Tanggoi's) leaf, that it had shrivelled.

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Now after Piagok's departure, Yak Tanggoi had gone to bathe with five other women. The five women pushed her down into the bathing well and drowned her, because they wanted Piagok for themselves.

Piagok returned and found his wife dead, and wrapped her body in a mat. Then he got an iron pan and heated water. Next he called the five women and said to them: "If you like my body, come and sit here." They came and sat down near him; whereupon he took the hot water and poured it over them all. Then there came water welling up from the ground and the house turned to stone, but Piagok carried Yak Tanggoi's body up to the sky.

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Dr. Winstedt contributes an anthology of Malay charms. These include a particularly cunning spell warranted "to frighten and capture a wild elephant." Almost more important than the charm itself is the way it has to be recited, for apparently it will not work unless uttered three mornings in succession at sunrise, the reciter standing on one leg.

There are quaint anecdotes in a paper on "Pahang Beliefs" contributed by Wan Lela of Penghulu Lipis. Punishments for offences against tribal morals or customs in vogue among the Kerau River people are here enumerated: a fine of sixty-six spears for murder; for stealing crops, one spear and one plate; for unfaithfulness on a woman's part, two plates and six spears.

And unquestionably the gem of the collection is Mr. Evans's tale of Awang Durahman, transcribed orally from the words of Pandak Leman of Kampong Perak.

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Awang Durahman was sitting one day in a tumble-down hut in the rice-fields, while his mother was weeding among the young crop. He took two cents from his *sireh*-wallet, and as he held them in his hand he said to himself: "With this money I'll buy two eggs, one a male, the other a female. After a time what a lot of fowls there'll be—thousands! These fowls too many! If so, sell these fowls. Buy ducks. Make a big pond; place for ducks to play. Ducks also many. 'Pak' up-stream, 'Pak' down-stream! 'Whose ducks are these?' 'The ducks of Awang Durahman!' Ducks eat people's padi. Sell the ducks; buy goats. Many goats go and eat people's crops. Very much trouble! 'Whose goats are these?' 'The goats of Awang Durahman!' Sell goats; buy oxen, oxen not a few. 'Boh' up-stream, 'Boh' down-stream! 'Whose oxen are these?' 'The oxen of Awang Durahman!' Sell oxen; buy buffaloes. Milk them. That old woman drinks a lot of milk; eats lots of curds. 'Whose buffaloes are these?' 'The buffaloes of Awang Durahman!' Sell buffaloes; buy elephants. Elephants 'Ruh' up-stream, 'Ruh' down-stream! Get into people's villages. 'Whose elephants are these?' 'The elephants of Awang Durahman!' Young male elephant with tusks just enclosing its trunk.

"I tell mother to load it with dollars and bring it to the Raja's house, asking the hand of his daughter. Raja gives it. Raja builds a house for a marriage. When I have married, I sit in the *baleh*. Play chess. Princess comes, 'Come my lord and eat rice.' I don't want to. I give checkmate. She comes again. She wears anklets, chering cherong. 'Come my lord and eat rice.' I don't want to. I give checkmate. She catches my hand. Digs me in the ribs. Dig her in the ribs. Chokok, chokok, chokok, chokok, chokok, chokok."

And as Awang Durahman dug himself in the ribs,

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first on one side and then on the other, wriggling the while, the posts of the hut gave way, and he came to the ground, cutting his legs on a tree stump. "What's the matter with you, Awang Durahman?" said his mother. "The Raja's daughter dug me in the ribs," answered Awang Durahman. "Where's the Raja's daughter?" asked his mother. "Oh, I was only thinking about her!" replied Awang Durahman.

This, of course, is a delightful variant of a story current in the legends of many races and many countries.

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The best book available about Malayan magic is Dr. R. O. Winstedt's *Shaman Saiva and Sufi*, which deserves to rank as literature of that rare order whose prototype is Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough*, and a permanent place on the library shelf somewhere near that great classic. Naturally, it will take up less room, for whereas Frazer sweeps the world with his net and takes the best years of a lifetime over it, Dr. Winstedt confines himself to Malaya, and is chained to other tasks than sifting the folk-lore even of one country and one race. What he has set out to do, however, he has accomplished very thoroughly. You can see that his heart is in his subject and all his data at his fingers' ends. Also, Dr. Winstedt can write.

This book is the outcome of a close study of the language and beliefs of the Malays during a sojourn of twenty-two years in the Peninsula, its primary object being to unravel a complex system of magic in the light of comparative and historical data. In turn, its author deals with the Malay's evolution from animist to Moslem, with animism *per se*, with shamanism, with such rites as betray Hindu influence, and, lastly, with Moslem accretions.

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The chapter entitled "The Soul of Things" furnishes forth hosts of instances to demonstrate the ingrained Malay habit of looking below the outer aspect of man and beast and plant and stone to find "the veiled power or inner life for which their exterior is the host or tabernacle," i.e. the "vital spark" (*semangat*). Souls even inhabit things useful to man, notably rice, and arrest the Malay's attention only less than that which is his own inner self.

This personal soul dwells in the names of objects both animate and inanimate, and it is rash to breathe such verbal talismans lightly. Parents call their children "ugly" or "fool" to mislead demons, in case they should find the child attractive enough to kidnap. Common prudence enjoins one's referring in a round-about fashion to oneself, one's father, mother, sister, brother, or friend. A Perak man much prefers to speak of his wife as "the person at home" or "my rice-bag," a Perak woman of her husband as "my chopper." Notably, the spirits of beasts have to be treated with respect. In the jungle, Dr. Winstedt reminds us, the dreaded tiger is "grandfather." On a mine the elephant, whose heavy feet and roving trunk can undo the work of puny men, must be called "the tall one." In Patani Bay fishermen call a crocodile the "baa-baa," a buffalo "moo," a sea-snake "the weaver's sword," a tiger "stripes," a monkey "Mr. Long Tail," a vulture "bald-head," a Buddhist monk "the yellow one," and sea-spirits "thingummies." Smallpox in many places is termed "the complaint of the good folk." Any mention of the real name may attract the capricious attention of the lords of the sea, the spirit of a disease, a human ghost, a king, an animal, or a mother-in-law. It may also frighten away such elusive things as ore in a mine or camphor in a tree. So, on a tin-mine, the ore

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must be called "grass-seed" and the metal "white stone." Collectors of camphor use an elaborate *tabu* vocabulary of aboriginal, rare, and artificial words; the bamboo is called "the drooper," bananas "the fruit in rows," bees "seeds on branches," blood "sap," a cat "the kitchen-tiger," a fire-fly "a torch for the eyes," the nose "the smeller," the jaws "the chewers," a bed "the cuddling-place," and so on. Not only is the name of camphor avoided, but no words are uttered which might lead the tree to suspect that Malays were in search of its treasures. So human in anger and fear are trees and minerals and beasts.

It is a far cry from Malaya to Foula, "Britain's loneliest inhabited island," and its existing population of just one hundred and fifty is pure Norse; yet there are some words that Foula men will never mention while at sea—"light," "woman," "minister," "cat," "moon," "end," etc. If necessary they use a circumlocution—"that which guides by night" for "the moon."

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Dr. Winstedt has written another good book. Outwardly, perhaps, his *Malaya* is not an attractive volume, heavy in the hand, ill-proportioned. Within, a first glance suspects a like heaviness, the thing seems crammed with statistics to the point of indigestion. A little patience, though, will serve to sift out a mass of highly valuable and interesting information, which, when it is Dr. Winstedt's own information, will be found engagingly presented, in a style pleasant to the eye and ear. He claims only to "edit" the work, but is wholly responsible for the best chapters in the volume, those on ethnology, language and literature, archæology, history, and Malayan art and crafts. "Malay literary works," he

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reminds us, "are seldom dated, and their authors seldom known. Generally we cannot say what romances, poems, and religious works were done in old Malacca or at the Courts of Kedah, Trengganu and Johore. But the Malays of the Peninsula have certainly to their credit the romance of Hang Tuah, the *Malay Annals*, the *Kedah Annals*, the *Misa Melayu*, the works of Abdullah. It is a respectable record, as Malay literature goes. And perusal of the vernacular press to-day will show that the literary spirit is still strong in the Peninsular Malay, though it is overlaid with tradition of translation, obsessed with religion, and groping in the dark for material."

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I am proud of being able to give the world an entirely new Malayan folk-story. The real credit pertains not to me, but to Sir Malcolm Watson, to whom mankind owes so much for his magnificent work in malaria prevention. Sir Malcolm's Malayan home is at Batu Blah, Klang, and it was from his kampong neighbours he assembled, bit by bit, the highly elaborate local legend he has called *The Cherita of Batu Blah*. Having known its outline for many years, he asked a Malay friend, Haji Osman, to write it. He did so, in Malay, and, translated into a quaint form of English by the Sultan of Selangor's Malay writer, it was turned over to me. A little editing was required, but not much. Here it is, set down for the first time in print:

The Cherita of Batu Blah

Once upon a time, near Bukit Berapit which is about a mile and a quarter from Klang Town, there lived one Gadih and his wife Kembang.

They were poor and used to all sorts of rough work.

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Their chief means of livelihood were fishing in rivers, vegetable and padi planting.

One evening they got their *sampan* (boat) and their fishing implements, namely *jala* (casting-net) and *tanggok* (a fish-trap), ready, and set out to Tanjong Putus Kechil and then to Tanjong Putus Besar. Here they threw their nets and secured many fishes.

At high tide Gadih told his wife it was time for them to stop fishing. So they did stop, and rowed back to Kuala Sungei Binjai, and thence to the *pengkalan* (stopping-place) about one and a half miles along the Kapar Road, Klang, on the left-hand side.

They got their *sampan* secured safely here and walked home with their booty. The next morning, after their bath, they were having their morning tea when Gadih said to his wife, "Oi—oi mari kita chari puchok chemperai—buleh kita kawan kan dengan ikan samalam" (*Come, let us go and collect some herbs to boil with the fishes we caught last night*).

So they went along the side of the Bukit Berapit, and had not gone very far when they came to a group of *pokok chemperai* (the herb of the *pokok chemperai* is very nice for *sayor*—vegetable).

Gadih began to pick the herbs, choosing only the tender ones, and put them into his wife's apron. But while they were so engaged, they heard a sound as if a wild boar or a dragon was snoring.

Rather frightened, but very anxious to ascertain what it was, they crept very cautiously towards the place whence the snoring came, Gadih in front and his wife behind him.

When they came to the place whence the breathing sound came, they saw neither dragon nor wild boar, but only a huge mass of white granite stone.

On the side of the great stone they saw an opening

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about fifty feet from one side to the other and four feet from top to bottom, like the upper and lower jaws of a large mouth, through which the snoring came. On the ground in front they saw that neither plant nor grass was growing, and not only that—the ground was very clean and not a single leaf could be found there.

They whispered one to another, "Hiran sekali, batu ada bermulot dan bulih ber-napas!" (*Curious! stone can have mouth and can breathe!*) and meanwhile a *plandok* (smallest of deer type) was passing just in front of the big mouth, and to their great astonishment mixed with terror they saw the *plandok* drawn right into the large mouth by some invisible force, and disappear from view.

And Gadih called out to his wife, "Oi—oi" (*Dear, dear*), "mari kita balik" (*let us go back*); and so they took to their heels and fled, and reached home safely.

At home Kembang began her cooking, and while she was doing that Gadih went to bed and slept. But he dreamed that his face had got into the moon.

After getting everything ready Kembang woke her husband. Gadih got up, washed his face, and went to the place where everything was ready for tiffin, and then called his wife, "Oi—oi, jempot makan bersama —sama" (*Come along, let us have our tiffin together*); and while they were having their tiffin the husband said, "Oi—oi sedap rasa—nya—tiada perenah bagini rasa sedap saya makan" (*I say! I never tasted anything so good as this before*); and Kembang said that she hadn't, either.

After they had finished their *makan*, Gadih called to his wife, "Oi—oi, mari kita melihat sampan kita di Pengkalan—besok kita handak menangkap ikan" (*Come along, let us go and see our* sampan—*to-morrow we are going out fishing*). So they made everything ready.

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Next morning they got into their *sampan* and glided down-stream, following the ebbing tide of the river, and came to Kuala Sungei Telok Gadong Besar.

They started fishing here, but caught few fishes, and then following the current, they came to Kuala Sungei Telok Gadong Kechil and caught a few fishes there, and then to Sungei Dua, and then to Kuala Sungei Udang, and still following the current, they came to Sungei Bertok.

Here they caught quite a lot of fishes, and when it was low water Gadih took his casting-net, and with it caught many prawns. While he was doing that Kembang steered the *sampan*.

The water now began rising, and so Gadih stopped casting his net and rowed to Jambatan Batu (near Kampong Attap, Klang), to sell their fishes, and after they had sold them, Gadih and Kembang got back into their *sampan* and went home.

One day soon after that Kembang said to her husband, "Oi—oi, sangat ingin hati saya handak makan buah binjai yang mengkal" (*Oh dear, how I do long for a half-ripe* buah binjai (a kind of fruit)); and as it was the fruit season Gadih managed to get one very soon and brought it home.

But when he gave it to her she was so anxious to eat it that instead of skinning it and cutting the fruit with a knife before eating, she simply bit it with her teeth, eating it right up with all the skin and leaving nothing but the seed.

After this she went to bed, but when she got up she felt very tired.

From this time onwards their padi plantation grew very healthy, neither birds nor rats ever attempted to destroy it, and whenever Gadih and Kembang went out fishing they caught plenty of fishes and prawns, and so

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they gathered together a great deal of money and became quite rich.

There were always a lot of people at their house, and they were able to engage labourers to reap the padi from their *ladang* (rice field), who were given a quarter of the amount they had collected, with which they were very pleased and satisfied.

So from now onwards the people called the husband Inche Gadih (Inche is a title of respect) and the wife Inche Kembang.

Inche Gadih was not only rich but he grew very polite and considerate, and so those around him far and near used often to visit him and his wife and honoured them, and their names became known throughout the country.

Exactly nine months and nine days after Kembang had eaten the *buah binjai*, at about noon on Sunday in the month of Rejab a beautiful daughter was born to Inche Gadih and his wife, and they gave her the name of "Bunga Melor."

After the birth of the child neither of them went out fishing, for they were now well-to-do.

Three years later the child began learning how to stitch, weave and cook. When she reached the age of five nobody in the country could surpass her for her beauty, her pretty ways of speech, and her charming manners not only to her parents but to everyone she came across.

Seven years later, on the morning of Friday in the month of Haji, Inche Kembang had a little son, and the ceremonies on account of his arrival were much grander than they had been for his elder sister, Bunga Melor.

This time Inche Gadih had no work to do, for his daughter Bunga Melor did all that was necessary about the house, looking after the new baby, lighting the fire,

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and so on. But one day very soon afterwards Inche Gadih fell ill, and five days after that, to the very great sorrow of his wife and children, he breathed his last.

Her husband's loss affected her so much that Inche Kembang seemed to lose her head, and became quite a different woman. People still visited her, but she took no heed of them, and neglected even her own dear children.

One day, without telling anything to her children, she took her *tanggok* (fish-trap) which she had not touched for years and walked to Sungei Binjai fishing. But though she went as far as the *ulu* (source) she caught nothing.

She felt very tired, and was about to return home, when she espied two *telor tembakol* (two eggs of a kind of fish), so she picked them up and went home.

On reaching her house she asked her daughter to cook them, and told her to keep one for her (Inche Kembang), and the other one she could eat with her little brother—Bunga Pekan—and while Bunga Melor was cooking, the mother went about the house doing other things, and then went to the well for her bath.

On coming back from her bath she called Bunga Melor to bring her the *telor tembakol*; but before she went to her mother to explain matters, her little brother—Bunga Pekan—knowing that he had done wrong, got up and went to his mother and sat on her lap.

Bunga Melor then explained to her mother how Bunga Pekan had eaten all the *telor tembakol*. But Inche Kembang said, "Kedua-kedua angkau ini tidak sayang kan mak" (*Neither of you love your mother*), and went out of the house, taking the padi which she had laid on the ground to dry to a shed, and there husking it. She then took some young coconut leaves and

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made them into *ketupat* (wrapper), put some rice into them, and boiled them.

The next morning she called both her children and said: "As neither of you like me I am going to Batu Blah to give myself up there, and you can stay where you are"; and when she had finished saying this, she began calling: "Batu Blah Batu Bertangkop, telan aku lulu lah aku—aku kempunan telor tembakol" (*O! Batu Blah, swallow me, for I'm so upset about these* tembakol), and then walked off all by herself in the direction of the Batu Blah.

At this the children did not know what to do, so they began to cry. But Bunga Melor collected all the things she thought would be useful, and had them packed up, and she also added a hen's egg to her bundle and followed her mother, taking her little brother Bunga Pekan with her. As she went she kept calling:

"Emak—emak nanyi ku dulu—Bunga Melor lapar kan nasik—Bunga Pekan lapar kan susu" (*Mother—mother, wait, Bunga Melor wants rice and Bunga Pekan wants milk*).

When the mother heard this, she paused, took one *ketupat*, poured some milk into a cup made of leaf, left them on the roadside, and continued her journey.

When they reached the spot where these lay, Bunga Melor took the *ketupat*, gave half to her little brother and ate the other half herself, and took the milk too and gave it to Bunga Pekan to drink, after which they proceeded on their journey again. After five halts of this kind, the mother, now only a few feet away from the mouth of the Batu Blah, began calling again, "Batu Blah Batu Bertangkop, telan aku lulu lah aku —aku kempunan telor tembakol"; and no sooner had she uttered the last word than Batu Blah opened its large mouth and made a big noise—"Ah-woom!"—

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like that of a large lion or tiger, and to the horror of both the children, they saw their mother being hurled towards the great mouth by some unseen power.

The children were very much terrified when they saw this, but for the love of their mother, instead of running away to save their lives, they rushed forward to save her. But they were too late. When they reached it the big mouth had already closed and the roaring ceased.

They now could not get even a glimpse of their mother except for a strand of her hair, which was jutting out between the closed jaws of the big mouth. They tried to pull their mother out by the hair, but in vain, and after waiting there for several days, crying all the time and never thinking of eating or drinking anything, Bunga Melor took out her pen-knife, cut seven of her mother's hairs, put them in her small bundle, and walked away towards the west, taking her little brother Bunga Pekan by the hand.

On their way they came to a house in a village named Bukit Pulau Tupai, and slept there that night. Bunga Melor asked the people of the house why people called the place Bukit Pulau Tupai (Squirrel Hill Island), and she was told that all around the hill was marshy land and from a distance the hill looked like a squirrel, and that was the reason why people called it so.

The next morning they proceeded on their journey, and next they came to another village named Bukit Perah Lantai. Here they managed to get shelter in a small house, and the owner gave them food. When Bunga Melor asked why the place was so called, she was informed that it was because *buah perah* (a kind of uneatable fruit) is abundant in that place, so that when matured it falls down and covers hundreds and hundreds of square feet of the place like *lantai* (a carpet).

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The next morning they again asked if they could go on, and continued on their journey. They came to a place called Bukit Mermang, this was so called because a tiger went up to the summit of the hill with its hairs erect (*mermang* means "erect"), running to and fro and roaring as if it was mad, and then several others followed suit, and the hairs of all these that went up the hill were *mermang*.

Early the next morning they started again on their way, and then came to a *kampong* called Sungei Berchat (Painted River). This was so called because all the fishes in the river were of very bright colours such as red, yellow, green, and so forth, as if they had been painted, and not long after this they arrived at another village named Sungei Puyu Puyu, and this was so called because nothing but *ikan puyu puyu* (a kind of freshwater fish) were found in the river of the village.

The next evening they arrived at a place called Bukit Pasi, very thickly populated. They were good people there and the children stayed there some few days. Bunga Melor asked one of the inhabitants why the place was so named. She was told that the right name of the place was Bukit Basi and not Bukit Pasi, and in the neighbourhood of the place this hill was the highest and nothing but low *bertam* (a kind of palm smaller than *nipah* or *attap*) were grown there, and this particular hill had a *birop* (survey mark) on it.

This hill was called Bukit Basi because a tiger had spent a whole morning going up this hill, reaching the top of it only at noon in order to find food and drink, but when it reached there, there was nothing to eat or drink at all, so it came down again half dead with hunger and thirst (*basi* means here "without getting any food").

The next place they came to was Bukit Kapar, and this was so called because there was once a big fight

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between a party of pirates (who happened to come to that place in their *sampan* through a river) and the *kampong* people.

They were of equal strength, and the fight therefore ended in a draw, and each side made their retreat for safety and left behind them several heads (*kapar* or *berkapar* means "anything lying about not in proper order"). From here the children started for Bukit Kerayong, for they heard that the place was a rich country and governed by a good Raja, where they thought they could be safe and earn their livelihood more easily.

They then saw a large house, and while they were on the way to it they met three people talking on the roadside. Bunga Melor asked them the name of the place and was told that the place was called Bukit Kerayong Tamarolan, and she asked why it was so called.

They said it was because it abounded with *kerayong* trees, and Tamarolan was the name of a certain Raja who came from Java to this place accompanied by his chiefs and retainers, and the people liked him very much and asked him to be their Raja, for the place now had many inhabitants and they had had no better person to rule over them; but he refused and went away, leaving one of his chiefs, whose name was Wijaya Sakti.

So Wijaya Sakti was proclaimed Raja, and when he became Raja he gave the name of Bukit Kerayong Tamarolan to this place in honour of the trees and also of his beloved Raja who had gone away.

The new Raja then ruled the place and became very popular, and people from all sides flocked in, and not long after he was married to a daughter of the most prominent person in the place.

One day, in the midst of heavy rainfall intermixed

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with lightning and thunder, a beautiful son was born to the new Raja and he gave the name of Petra Gayang Indra Sakti to the newly-born child.

The boy grew up to be a very strong, clever and kind-hearted man, and one day the Raja caught fever, and in a few days later died; and before his burial took place the son, who was at that time only thirteen years of age, was proclaimed Raja, and he was known as "Sultan Petra Gayang Indra Sakti."

"This particular Sultan," said the three people on the roadside, "is very young and does justice to all his subjects, and so they like him very much; but he is very fond of cock-fighting and has a ground made known as *gelangang* just in front of his *Balai Penghadapan* (Assembly Court)."

Bunga Melor then asked to whom the big and beautiful house belonged which was not very far from where they were, and was informed that the house belonged to the *Ketua* (headsman) of that section, and so Bunga Melor took her little brother by the hand and went to the said house.

The *Ketua* then asked them to come up, and gave them food and shelter and requested them to stay with them, and so they stayed there. A few months passed, and Bunga Melor and Bunga Pekan one day approached the *Ketua* and asked for permission to build a small hut for themselves on a hill not very far from the *Ketua's* house.

The *Ketua* not only gave them permission, but called some workmen and had the hut made for them, and when it was finished they went and lived there.

Bunga Melor then remembered her bundle, so she opened it and took out the egg which she had taken from the house on the day she left, and the hairs (seven in number) of her mother's which she had cut from the

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mouth of the Batu Blah, and put the egg in a cage and buried the hairs in front of her hut.

To her great surprise, by the will of Mighty God, seven days later seven *pokok kandis* shot up from the ground and the egg hatched.

The *kandis* trees grew up and bore fruits, and as for the chicken, it quickly grew to be very strong and promising as a fighting-cock. One day Bunga Pekan asked permission from his sister to explore the neighbourhood, for although he had been living there for some years, he had never been about and had never seen what the place was like.

Bunga Melor gave him permission to do so, but cautioned him to be very careful and be very polite to all the country folk, whosoever they might be, young or old, and to behave as all good and educated people ought to.

Bunga Pekan promised to do so, and walked away.

Near the Assembly Court he met several people who took notice of him and showed him the sights, and in front of the Court he saw an open space dotted with all kinds of beautiful flowers. He was told that on every Sunday the Sultan sat in this square to watch the cock-fighting, and the Sultan himself had fighting-cocks, and some of those who brought fighting-cocks sometimes made good fortunes out of this game, and they requested him to come and see the fun next Sunday.

He then took leave and returned home. He told his sister all that he had seen and heard, and begged of her to allow him to take his cock to the *gelangang* to try his luck there.

Bunga Melor said: "I will allow you to go with pleasure and wish you good luck, but you must remember to make yourself the humblest of the Sultan's subjects, and to respect all the people around you, and if

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the Sultan wishes our cock to challenge his you can accept, but you must say that you cannot afford to bet; and, in case you win, that what you want is food and clothing; but if you lose you can give yourself up to the Sultan as his servant; and when your cock fights, do not utter any word or move about as most people are accustomed to do, but keep quite still and quiet."

Bunga Pekan promised to do all this, took his cock, put it under his arm, and went away towards the appointed place.

When he reached there, one of the *mentri* (ministers) saw him and asked him if he wanted any challenge. He said, "Mahu juga" (*Yes*), and he was taken into the *gelangang* (ring) with his cock before the Sultan.

The Sultan then asked him if he wanted to bet. Bunga Pekan then held up both his hands and said: "Your Highness, I am poor and worth nothing, but if your Highness can accept, my bet is—if I win, you have to give me food and clothing, and if I lose I will work with you as your servant as long as your Highness wants."

The Sultan then asked his *mentri* to let loose his cock, and Bunga Pekan remembered his sister's words and announced the name of his cock, which was "Klang Berapit Gayong," and let it loose; and to the surprise of all those present, after a few strokes the Sultan's cock was smitten down unconscious, and so Bunga Pekan's cock was declared victor.

The Sultan then ordered eight people to bring food and clothing—each as much as he could carry—and sent them with their burden to follow Bunga Pekan to his house.

When they were about a quarter of a mile away from his house he asked the people to wait for him there, for he said he wished to make room for the goods they were bringing, his house being so small.

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So Bunga Pekan walked away, leaving the eight people behind, and when he reached home, he told his sister of what had happened and asked her to hide herself when the men came bringing the goods; but one of the men had followed him unseen and saw Bunga Melor, and also heard what Bunga Pekan had told her, and returned to the place where he was left before Bunga Pekan reached there.

Bunga Pekan then reached the spot where he had left the men and the goods, and asked them to follow him to his house.

He then had all the goods secured in his hut, and the men asked leave to return home; but Bunga Pekan invited them to wait for tea.

They refused this invitation and returned home. The next morning, while the eight men were in the *istana* (palace) the Sultan asked one of them where Bunga Pekan lived, and whether there were many people in his house.

The man who had seen Bunga Melor then told the Sultan of what he had seen and heard, and the Sultan sent a messenger to Bunga Pekan's house asking him to bring his "Klang Berapit Gayong" for another challenge, but before Bunga Pekan's arrival, the Sultan asked one of his *mentri* to attend the *sabong* (cock-fight), and requested him to tell those who came that he had a slight headache and therefore could not attend himself.

The *berlaga ayam* (cock-fighting) usually finished at 12 noon, and at about 10 a.m. the Sultan, accompanied by the man who had told him everything he had seen and heard at Bunga Pekan's, walked off to Bunga Pekan's house, and on arrival there, the follower knocked at the door and said, "Kakak, kakak, buka pintu—Bunga Pekan balik" (*Sister, sister, open the door—*

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Bunga Pekan returns), and when saying this, made his voice sound like that of Bunga Pekan.

Bunga Melor then opened the door, and to her great surprise she saw a stranger standing before her instead of her dear little brother, and ran back to her room hiding herself in a terrible fright.

The Sultan had no sooner set eyes on Bunga Melor than he fell in love with her, but did nothing to show that this was the case. What he did do was to send his follower to fetch the wives of his *mentri* and all his principal chiefs to join him, and on their arrival he asked them to go into the house. Meanwhile Bunga Pekan came back from the *gelangang*, and to his surprise saw the Sultan at his house; but before he could utter a word the Sultan asked him to pardon him for getting there before him like that, and told Bunga Pekan he had brought the wives of all his principal officers in order to invite his sister Bunga Melor to live in his *istana*, and at the same time asked Bunga Pekan to accompany them also.

Bunga Pekan then asked his Highness's permission to go into the house to speak to his sister. The Sultan said he had no objection, so Bunga Pekan went in and told his sister what the Sultan had said, and so they got everything packed up and went to live in the *istana*. A few days later the Sultan ordered his *mentri* to prepare for the marriage, and when everything was ready, Bunga Melor was then proclaimed "Permaisury Gayang Bunga Melor Indra Sakti."

Although she was now the wife of the Sultan, Bunga Melor did not look very happy, for she was always thinking of her dear mother. One evening the Sultan asked her why she was always looking so sad. So she told him the whole story of how her dear mother had been swallowed by the Batu Blah alive.

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When the Sultan heard this he ordered his *mentri* to get ready with a hundred of his best *hulubalang* (warriors) to go and destroy the wicked Batu Blah.

The next morning the Sultan, the Sultana, Bunga Pekan, a few female attendants, and the hundred selected *hulubalang* left the *istana* for Bukit Berapit, leaving the *mentri* to look after the welfare of the country.

The Batu Blah was soon reached, and the Sultan saw that the hairs of his mother-in-law were still to be seen between the jaws of the big mouth, and also he could hear the feeble breathing of the Batu Blah.

The Sultan thereupon took hold of the hairs and tried to pull them out, but in vain. He got very angry at this, and took hold of the upper jaw of the big mouth, tearing it open, but after all they saw nothing inside and the breathing sound now ceased entirely.

They made a thorough search for their mother there without any result at all, so they returned home, and Permaisury Gayang Bunga Melor Indra Sakti was now as satisfied as she could be, for her husband had destroyed the Batu Blah and had at least taken revenge for her dear mother.

A few years later the Sultan arranged for Bunga Pekan to be married to a daughter of one of his *mentri* and gave him a high appointment, and so they all lived there happily ever after.

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CHAPTER V

BEASTS, BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES

THE Malay Peninsula is extraordinarily rich in animal as in vegetable forms, and here again a very high percentage is indigenous. We possess more kinds of butterflies and moths, more species of frogs and toads, than any other country of our size on the globe. We also have the elephant, the *seladang*, the tapir, the tiger, a one-horned and a two-horned rhinoceros, likewise two species and three varieties of the leopard, plain and coloured, most if not quite all of these roaming of nights within half a day's march of the walls wherein we hold Sanitary Board meetings before lunch, and *bals masqués* after dinner. Some of our insects have to be seen before they are believed. Stick and leaf monstrosities can be read about in school prizes, not so the battling fire-fly whose larva is as big as a mouse and eats snails, or that cicada which is over nine inches long, has eyes like motor-lamps, and a scream like a Klaxon horn.

. . . . . .

Many other oddities—flying lemurs, flying squirrels, flying lizards. What we call flying foxes, but are fruit-eating bats. Our *keluang* (*Pteropus vampyrus malaccensis*) is about the largest of its order, with a wing-stretch of nearly five feet; a tiny black bat (*Emballonura peninsulæ*) almost the smallest.

About the creeks and islets between Singapore and

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Riau and along the Johore and Negri Sembilan coasts occurs the dugong or manatee. The mummified anomalies they call "mermaids" at Aden are dugongs. Their tears are infallible love-charms, as all Malays know. The Riau islanders carve dugongs' teeth into cigarette-holders. I found one caught once in a coco-nut-planter's *pagar*, or fish-trap, at Tumbuk, near Port Dickson, when we went down for a midnight bathe.

Big-game shooting is obtainable in Malaya, but the nature of the country puts many difficulties in the visiting Nimrod's way. Professional Malay hunters are scarce, and the ordinary peasant dislikes assisting a stranger who cannot speak his language. Licences for the shooting of nearly every large animal are essential, as they ought to be. Not improperly, too, they are more expensive for visitors than for residents. There are, however, game wardens in all states, who will do all they can to help if reasonable notice is given to them as to the type of sport desired, time available for the same, and so forth. It will be a mistake to hope that anything of the kind may be accomplished in a hurry, during the fortnight's interval between steamer sailings, for instance, unless one is very lucky indeed.

The *seladang*, a cousin of the Indian gaur or bison, is undoubtedly our most sporting quarry. An extremely cunning and powerful animal, though not aggressive when left undisturbed he has a horrid trick, on finding himself pursued in thick bush, of doubling back (the African bush-cow and the gorilla also do this) and charging his attacker from the rear. The most experienced hunters of *seladang* have not seldom paid for their temerity with their lives. A huge head that hung till lately among other trophies in the Selangor Club recalled one such tragedy of twenty years ago, for it belonged to the animal which before it fell to

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a companion's rifle killed Captain Syers, then Chief of Police. Another wild ox, the banting or tsain (Malay *sapi*), almost certainly exists in the Peninsula along the Siam border. A handsome creature, he is yet not so imposing as the *seladang*, whose lines are much lighter and more clean-cut than the equally powerful buffalo's. For an ox his legs seem unduly long, his head (though there is a pedigree look about it) a little small for his powerful, hump-backed frame. Blackish of coat, with white splashes on the hocks, he is able to remain almost invisible in the light jungle or bamboo thicket, dappled in sunlight and shadow, that he haunts. For good stories of *seladang* and other hunts, read Sir George Maxwell's *In Malay Forests*.

There is no close season for the tiger, nor any licence required to shoot him, for he is still far too numerous in the Peninsula. Even in these days, he roves by night almost everywhere, swims sometimes across the Johore Straits to Singapore Island (one was reported at Seletar, site of the Admiralty wireless station and the new Naval Base, two years ago), pads through compounds on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. The Malay villager, the Chinese coolie, loathe and dread him. He keeps alive the werwolf cult in Malaya, and almost any old Malay will swear to known cases of witches and warlocks of his own race who turned into tigers by night and terrorised all their neighbours. Man-eating tigers are more or less regularly reported, if not so frequently as in India, owing perhaps to the more plentiful supply of animal food. Five years ago a tiger haunting the Port Dickson district accounted for about two tapping coolies per week till he was shot by a planter. The case was notable for the difference of opinion arising over the attempted use of "human bait" in this case, some people insisting that the bodies of human victims should not be removed from where they were found

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for burial, in the hope that the tiger might return to his kill and be there effectually ambushed. Not unnaturally, the Chinese outcry against this disrespectful treatment of their dead found European sympathisers, but the controversy raised heat in some quarters, there were questions in the Federal Council, and the problem was only resolved by the shooting of the tiger, *not* through the agency of human bait.

A Malayan chamois, the serow (Malay *kambing gurun*), has his home on some of the peculiar limestone crags already mentioned. From the nature of his habitat he is rarely seen and more rarely shot, but there are serows at South Kensington, and the Zoo I believe has had living specimens.

One does not, naturally, shoot monkeys. Malaya has three species of anthropoids, the *siamang*, largest and rarest, occurring sparingly in the hills from Perak to Negri Sembilan. He is sometimes kept as a pet, but the males grow savage in maturity. These apes are black, with a bare pouch under the chin, sometimes a whitish muzzle. The two or three gibbons are much smaller. Their Malay name, *wak-wak*, reproduces their early morning call, often heard even in the outskirts of the towns.

The *berok*, or coconut monkey, is a macaque, though in appearance more resembling the baboons. Caught young, some Malays train him to climb coconut palms and pick any nut his master points out, while some say he can be taught to select the right ones entirely by himself, twisting these off their stems and throwing them down in the most methodical fashion.

The slow loris (*Nycticebus tardigradus*) looks like a sloth, but is really a lemur. Nocturnal in its habits, as its name implies, it is sometimes carried on Malay ships to ensure a favouring wind.

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In Malaya black leopards are much more commonly seen than the spotted type. That they cannot possibly be a different species has been proved by their having more than once been found in the same litter. In Negri Sembilan also exists the clouded leopard (*Felix nebulosa*), a rare and beautiful animal, arboreal in its habits.

Kipling's "Red Dog," or a closely allied type (*Cyon rutilans*—Malay *anjing utan*), occurs in the hills of Perak and Pahang, but only a few packs, roaming over large areas, have been identified. A big, handsome, foxy-looking beast, he has a sinister reputation with the Malays. In packs, from six to forty strong, they run down and destroy goats, cattle, and some say even buffaloes. A friend of mine told me of a horrid spectacle he witnessed from the train in early railway days in Perak, a sambur stag bogged in the swamp within forty yards of the line, absolutely unable to move but clearly pitifully aware of a trailing score of *anjing utan* relentlessly crawling down upon it over the morass. The Malays say that to meet a pack of these dogs spells disaster within the twelvemonth unless they are not giving tongue at the moment, in which case you are all right if you bark yourself very quickly, before their baying begins again. They also declare that the urine of these animals causes blindness, and that they will purposely deposit this on tree-trunks and grasses against which their prey is likely to rub.

Malaya's one bear (*beruang*) is an undersized little creature, but nimble, and apt to be savage when cornered. Many make a pet of him; his antics, especially in babyhood, being very engaging.

Malayan jungles hold many elephant herds. Taming the local elephant is a task they only attempt in Malacca and Perak. Indian mahouts were recruited

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to Malacca three hundred years ago, but Perak seems to follow Siamese methods. The Malays know nothing of "kraaling" as habitually practised in Ceylon, and make very little use of their few tame elephants for transport, though in Upper Perak a British official, lately retired after very long and distinguished service, never bestrode anything else in his peregrinations, public or private. Malayan male elephants are poor in ivory, and smaller than the Indian species.

Plandok, the mouse-deer so called, though really a far more primitive animal, is a tiny little pencil-legged beast of curious contours, much higher off the ground aft than forward. The males wear long tushes in the upper jaw. *Plandok* is the Brer Rabbit of all Malayan folk-tales, more than making up in resource and stratagem for his deficiencies in size and strength.

When you hear of armadillos in your district be sure they are not armadillos. They are pangolins, a curious armoured anachronism. A live one appeared in *Chang*, the famous elephant picture filmed in Siam. Chinese use the pangolin's scales as medicine, certain castes of Tamils cook and enjoy the whole beast as our gipsies do hedgehogs.

Ordinarily, you do not see many birds in Malaya, but 650 species exist there nevertheless. Most striking of the commoner types are peafowl and the Argus pheasant, though the latter is shy and an adept at concealing himself from view when practically under your nose. The seven or eight duck species are all rare, but snipe and several species of pigeon (*punai*) give you good shooting in most places where their haunts are accessible. Some of the fruit doves and imperial pigeons are highly decorative birds. The really gorgeous colonies among Malayan birds, however, are formed by the trogons, barbets, cuckoos, bee-eaters and

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kingfishers, of which last we have sixteen different species, some living far from water and feeding exclusively on insects. There are only two parrots.

Hornbills (*Bucerotidæ*) are common but bizarre features of most Malayan jungles. Their oddly-shaped beaks present a grotesque range of distortions and excrescences, varying with every species. A less known eccentricity is the habit some of them have of walling up their nests so that the sitting mother bird is unable to desert her young even if so inclined. Powerful but clumsy fliers, they can often be seen volplaning across some clearing in high jungle, with the engine, so to speak, turned off. Their flopping wing-beats make a curious noise, due to the rush of air through the naked quills of their wing-feathers.

The drongos or king-crows include one or two "racket-tailed" species, whose outer tail-feathers are prolonged in a slender spine expanding into a disc- or paddle-shaped appendage. I shall not forget being mystified, one late afternoon soon after my arrival in the country, on seeing one of these birds swooping and curveting above the tree-tops about forty yards away. It seemed to me to be pursued by two large and indomitable black hornets that tenaciously followed, about two feet in the rear, every twist and turn of its flight.

There are one or two indigenous crows, and here and there at certain locations on the western coast an interloper or alien crow. Or perhaps that is unjust to him. In my own time his arrival created quite a sensation, of which the history is related in a three-years-old record of my own composition from which I may be forgiven for quoting.

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"*Kuala Lumpur, February 1925.*

"The latest news from Klang discloses the fact that another Government 'strafe' is afoot, nothing less than an organised and determined scheme to abolish and utterly exterminate, without distinction of age or sex, a whole community of creatures, perhaps a lowly one, but certainly not inarticulate. However savage it sounds, this measure is obviously intended for the public good. Our Government is no Moloch, battening on blood-sacrifices for the gratification of an insensate whim, and when it orders the destruction of any sentient creature or creatures it is clear that such measure has been devised for the greatest benefit of the greatest number, and that the victims thoroughly deserve their fate, or are at least honestly believed to do so.

"To dispel humanitarian qualms on the part of anybody who may happen to read these lines, perhaps it ought to be disclosed without any further beating about the bush that this latest 'frightfulness' campaign on the part of the Federal Government is not directed against any human objective, however base, and that it is not rubber-smugglers, anti-restrictionists, or even bobbed-haired bomb-droppers, whose felonious activities are to be thus drastically curtailed. True, the tribe now doomed to outlawry, and worse, is a robber tribe, the individual marauders composing it walking on two legs. But that is only when the fancy takes them. Mostly, their comings and goings are aerially conducted, like those of the angels. The Government, however, says they are no angels, very far from it indeed, and will probably argue, with thoughts in their mind of Lucifer's sable pinions, that all the Klang crows are veritable devils.

"Anyway, be they ministers of grace or of abomination, their number seems to be 'up.' There is a price of 20 cents on the head of every crow from Port

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Swettenham to Batu Tiga, and 10 cents (no less) on every crow's egg. No wonder that the rising of a new hunter's moon is now recorded from the district, nor that the siesta of its civilian population should now be a thing only of memory, no consecutive five minutes of any Sunday afternoon remaining unpunctuated by the 'frequent gun.' We must all hope that whatever enterprising young official has been detailed to receive and count the eggs, and allot rewards to their collectors, really does know a crow's egg when he sees one.

"I personally am aware of at least one bungalow cook who knows where to buy quite good hen's eggs for 6 cents (probably less, as that is what he charges his master), and there must be cheaper eggs, below the approval of even bungalow cooks, so that of any such it seems the addition of a little colour-wash will at least triple their value, and that eggs of the really edible variety will shortly vanish from all Malayan menus. If that is not to happen, Government must reduce the tariff, or young Mr. X., M.C.S., must take an intensive course in ornithology at the Museum.

"Whether one is right about that or not, only time will show. A point to be settled first is the indispensability or otherwise of the whole affair. Is the Klang-Port Swettenham battue an act of really righteous vengeance, or is it an entirely misguided if well-intentioned massacre of the innocents? Honestly, some of us are doubtful, and that not from reasons of pure soft-hearted sentiment, but because we happen to know a thing or two about crows ourselves. Kuala Lumpur kens him not, this crow, for though his wits are far from homely he is a great homekeeper, and while an arrant adventurer, venturesome only within limits. We believe he came to Port Swettenham because he was invited; even, not to put too fine a point upon it, brought there. Colombo

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was his home. It was there, during a whole lustrum of years, that we grew to be very familiar with him and his idiosyncrasies, to condone his immoralities, or most of them, and ultimately to cherish even a sneaking regard for him. True, he will steal anything portable, devour anything edible, makes an infernal row on occasion, and is sometimes guilty of singularly gross lapses of consideration for those who tolerate his near neighbourhood. But he has one great utilitarian merit. He is the King of Scavengers. On the æsthetic or abstract side, he not seldom betrays the possession of a kind of goblin humour. His 'cheek' is so consummate, his worst enormities committed with so twinkling an air of diablerie, that wrath becomes disarmed. He is a handsome, dashing creature too, if you take a good look at him from close quarters, his subspecific title, *Corvus splendens*, being indeed no misnomer. Unlike the sooty ragged coats of his northern cousins, his plumage is sleek and lustrous; burnished, if not with a 'lively iris,' at least with the lower tones of every tint in the spectrum, while his physical habit is also more neat and dapper than those of other crows. Speaking unscientifically, I have always felt inclined to think of him more as a jackdaw. I will also say here and now that in Ceylon not one person in a hundred ever thinks of killing him, and the Government's attitude goes beyond that of benevolent neutrality, an occasional proposal to campaign against him always having been met with a most decided negative. What are the peccadilloes upon which he has been here indicted no one seems to know exactly, but some say that it is because he stands convicted of cannibalism, the eggs and young of other wild birds having suffered casualties at his beak and claws. No doubt he does occasionally go in for this kind of thing like any other devilment, but not to excess, as we may

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reasonably conjecture, and it might be suggested that this is really a matter for systematic inquiry and the furnishing of proper statistics. One cannot think it possible that the evil wrought in this way will outweigh the good. The immigrant crow can hardly, even in these alien airs, have completely lost his native taste and talent for tidying up unconsidered trifles that require to be so dealt with in the interests of public health, and in the public interest more than his own a truce in the present very one-sided hostilities ought to be demanded till these points shall be fully and satisfactorily inquired into. One feels inclined to ask (surely without irreverence) where would Elijah have been if King Ahab had harboured the same convictions in this admittedly recondite matter as the Chief Secretary?"

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"*July* (*same year*).

"Bird-lovers in the Klang and Port Swettenham areas will be aware that from the beginning of this year Government has been conducting an anti-crow campaign in their district. Tempted by the offer of a 20 cents *per capita* reward from Treasury funds for all corpses of crows delivered at the Secretariat, and 10 cents per crow's egg, mercenaries of the civil population have joined in the slaughter with a vengeance, and the corvine contingents of Klang have been sadly thinned in consequence. The fact that the persecuted crow has not lacked partisans, in the press and elsewhere, who have endeavoured to protect him not only on humanitarian but economic grounds, has not been altogether overlooked by the Government, who are known to have acted upon a suggestion that the crops and gizzards of selected victims should be examined with a view to determining the exact character of their

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diet. Though the crow passed this test with flying colours and the fact is now established by local scientists that he really does consume pests in very considerable numbers, Government has obstinately refused to admit its initial mistake, and no cessation of the slaughter has been permitted. In the ordinary course of things, it would look as if the total extinction of the crow tribe throughout the Federated Malay States would be effected at an early date. However, the crows themselves have inaugurated a new development for which the Government can never have bargained, and one that will put a considerable strain on official ingenuity if an effective counter-move is to be devised. Kampong Malays who have been watching the proceedings with the mild interest extended by their kind towards most forms of activity which Government enterprise generates in their midst, and who probably, in their quiet way, know more about crows than most of us, have lately marked and reported the development of a new habit on the crows' part, nothing less in fact than that of laying eggs four times a year instead of twice as heretofore. If they can only keep this kind of thing up they may well give their oppressors cause to pause and consider if the game is worth the candle."

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There are alleged to be three crocodiles in Malaya, but of these *C. palustris*, the marsh crocodile, so common in Ceylon tanks, is of doubtful occurrence except in the Siamese states. *C. porosus*, the estuarine species, lives in tidal waters, the sea, and nearly every Malayan river. It is known to travel great distances overland, though rarely encountered while so doing, and often crops up in the *lombongs* or old mining pools frequently used for bathing, a fact it is as well to bear in remembrance. The slender-

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jawed gavial (*Tomistoma schlegeli*) has been identified in the Perak, Pahang, and Selangor rivers, but is a rare beast. Exclusively a fish-eater, he is not accounted dangerous to man.

C. porosus is commoner on the west side of the ranges; in the mangrove swamps and tidal waterways is indeed an absolute pest, and undoubtedly kills more people in Malaya every year than the tiger. Shooting him by night from a canoe or launch (you can detect him by the red glow of his eyes) is a sport one indulges in on occasion, but it is a smelly, messy, and not very exciting business. The skins, however, are worth a few dollars each after they have been cured.

This also applies to the monitor lizard, practically the same beast as the *cabragoya* of Ceylon and nearly allied to the famous "dragons" of Komodo. Their dappled hides make excellent shoes, turned out very cheaply and well by most of the Chinese bootmakers.

There are many tortoises and turtles, the collection of whose eggs is a prerogative of the rulers in the Native States. These are not very appetising, but most Asiatics consider them great delicacies, and will pay high prices for them.

Of the lizards, the small house geckos or *chichaks* are most in evidence. They do good work in keeping the fly and mosquito population down in one's bungalow, which is just as well, considering that there is no known means of keeping them away if one wished to do so. I once occupied a bungalow specially built for me, and four days after moving in, and before the paint had properly dried, I met a gecko walking up the steps of the porch, obviously coming to take up its abode with me. In a fortnight the ceilings were alive with them. They are rather noisy little beasts, over-prone to fighting and scuffling. Their war-cry is peculiar, and has

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been compared by some to the sound of a particularly spanking kiss. The presence of these "lizards" on the ceiling of Government House, while a state banquet was in progress, was thought by the late Lord Northcliffe to be very shocking. There is a very large kind, *Gecko stentor*, whose name does it no injustice, which dwells in trees and lives on young mammals and birds, also a large spotted species, the *tokay*, found in some Singapore bungalows and introduced, it is said, from Bangkok.

There are 130 different snakes, none of them very common and few of them highly poisonous, characteristics which apply least perhaps to the cobra. The Indian *kerait* or Ceylon *tic polonga* is happily absent. The Malayan python grows to a very large size, but is not accounted harmful to man. In the Malacca Straits sea-snakes abound, most of them highly poisonous. Walking along the sands where the coconuts come right down to the sea, when the tide has just turned, one finds them wriggling among the roots. They make for the sea when attacked, but are easy to kill with a walking-stick. At Tumbuk I have slain dozens.

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It is odd that Malayan butterflies are not more in evidence, seeing what hundreds of species are recorded, and how gay their coloration is in many cases. Yet careful search along the mountain streamlets, in glades and jungle corners remote from human habitation, will yield the collector quite gratifying results. Kuala Lumpur is a good centre, the hills round Gombak and Ginting Simpah being rich in rare and beautiful species. A lovely green and black butterfly of the Ornithoptera group can frequently be surprised sipping the trickle of water that runs down the roadside wall below the

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Ginting Simpah police post. The giant Atlas moths are also common here. Every year I collected their caterpillars from one particular hibiscus in my compound. If you week-end up at Ginting Simpah, the large females, as big as bats, come blundering in at your window, and their floppings about the room will distract you until you douse your candle. Here also humming-bird hawk moths haunt the rose-bushes in the compound, hard to distinguish on the wing from the tiny sun-bird. Malaya has no true humming-birds.

Migratory swarms of butterflies are not uncommon.

At some seasons of the year a fascinating phenomenon is discernible on up-country roads, and particularly along the hairpin windings of the road between the Gap and Bukit Fraser. Here myriad swarms of small yellow butterflies assemble every few hundred yards or so, attracted to drink at the puddles caused by seepage from the overhanging rocks. Dainty little creatures whose existence in the imago stage is quite ephemeral, their ranks as they gather on the ground with golden wings carried in the upright position seem literally packed shoulder to shoulder. The millions constantly in the air are thickened as every passing car disturbs an extra hundred thousand or so from their thirst-quenching task, though the majority take no heed of such interruptions. There must be few natural spectacles of wayside tropical life that can surpass in beauty the tremulous apparition of these Danaë showers as they first strike the wayfarer's eye.

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CHAPTER VI

RUBBER

BRITISH MALAYA has other industries and resources, but it is no exaggeration to claim that, on the whole, she stands or falls upon the prosperity or otherwise of her vast rubber plantations. Ceylon also produces rubber, a great deal of it in fact, but actually Malaya's acreage is seven times larger. When rubber booms, every other industry and useful activity in Malaya thrives; when rubber slumps, her merchants (not only her rubber-merchants) and their clerks, her professional men, traders and agriculturists of every grade and their employees, tighten their belts, and there are empty bellies in the kampongs. There will be simple Malay villagers who neglected their padi-planting in their haste to plant rubber and so provide magnificent dowries for their daughters. And the blight extends farther. Government's finances are straitened, essential public works are held up or abandoned, roads remain unmade, malarious areas cease to be drained, hard-won advantages gained in the struggle with the forces of disease and pestilence that goes on unceasingly in all tropical countries still under development, are lost.

There are said to be over a million British shareholders in rubber companies. They include, broadly speaking, every non-Government worker engaged or lately engaged in commerce or the professions throughout the Malay Peninsula, in addition to the two thousand or so working planters who supervise the actual business

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of rubber production. These are the people who, while fully bearing their part with the official element in maintaining the white man's burden, do so, in the majority of cases, in the foreknowledge that no pension awaits them, and that having once expended their resources of energy and efficiency (a quick business in these latitudes) they will be called on to retire in favour of younger men, on their savings, if they have got any.

If they have, these will most certainly be represented, in the main, by shares in local rubber companies, investments justified when made by first-hand knowledge of these undertakings, and further stimulated by a species of local patriotism, no unworthy motive in itself. The investments of such people have declined in value by approximately 70 per cent in the last few months, that is, since the existing British Government evinced so curious a desire to meddle with the natural equipoise of market sentiment at a time when statistics were just beginning to justify a recrudescence of optimism. Eighty million sterling has gone, very literally, West, in commodity and share values, and the Americans are tickled to death about it.

The victims of this blundering statesmanship are those who gave, when they could not afford it, the battleship *Malaya* to the British Navy at the outbreak of war, and two years ago, when they could afford it still less, came down with a voluntary and most princely contribution of £2,000,000 towards the cost of the Singapore Base.

These little points seem worth remembering, at such a crisis in their fortunes as now faces them.

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Mr. Aldous Huxley, for whom the Malayan Government Railway unfolded a day-long panorama of them

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in his recent wanderings, thinks a rubber plantation a poor thing in maturity, and in its youth an eyesore. What he saw was brown desolation stretching from either side of the line, the stumps still standing, charred trunks lying along the ground. "Soon they will be rooted and dragged away, and in 1932 or thereabouts another million of goloshes and Malthusian squirts will be distributed throughout a grateful world." Other things too, of course, and Mr. Huxley knows it, admitting that he will be wanting some new tyres and *crêpe* soles himself.

Mr. Huxley and his compatriots, the motorists and pedestrians, devotees of goloshes and other whatnots, of all Europe, Asia, Africa and South America, consume year by year 30 per cent of the growing tonnage of exported rubber, which passed the half-million mark in 1925, but will, they say, lag behind consumption by 1933. The United States takes the rest. We have, in our Malayan and Ceylon plantations, not perhaps a monopoly but certainly a major holding in the raw product. For this raw rubber we get a fluctuating but on the whole a good price. America's order being a large one, so is the bill. She pays, and has always paid, but has lately, since, that is to say, the British plantations were rescued from ruin in the nick of time by the Stevenson Restriction Scheme, taken to squealing.

Less than twenty years ago, when I first went East, I recollect the price of plantation rubber was 12s. 6d. a pound, and even then we were getting American tyres, not enormously expensive, yet I do not remember any American complaints of British profiteering. A dozen years later, plantation rubber was down to 8d., and United States manufacturers could, for a time, buy all they wanted at that price. But curiously enough, the tyre consumer, even in America, had to pay just

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as much for his tyres as he did before. Such increases and cuts in tyre prices as have been made from time to time, have, as is apparent from contemporary statistics, borne little if any relation to the current fluctuations in raw rubber prices. Rubber, of course, is not the sole constituent of tyres. There is cotton, subject surely to "restriction" occasionally, and certain chemicals.

But what of the Americans' threat to grow their own rubber? Are they bluffing, do they mean to try, and if they do seriously try, can they succeed? These possibilities have assumed a topical prominence now that Mr. Henry Ford, the world's richest man, is said to have bought 1,200,000 acres of land in Para (not so very far from the traditional site of El Dorado) for £8,000,000 sterling, to be in negotiation for an additional 2,800,000 acres, presumably at the same price or thereabouts, and to intend developing the whole territory thus acquired as a colossal rubber plantation. If the first part of this report is true, the last is obviously so. Such an area would be precious little use for anything else, at least to Mr. Ford. Certainly this geographical zone was the birthplace of all the *hevea braziliensis* in the world. The seeds whose progeny is represented in millions where formerly the jungle ran riot upon half the hillsides of British Malaya and Ceylon and the Dutch East Indies were very dexterously smuggled by the still extant veteran Sir Henry Wickham [1] from just that area where Mr. Ford is conducting his little operation in real estate. Plantation rubber will certainly grow there. But there is more in it than that.

Two years ago we were treated to a similarly grandiloquent gesture by Mr. Harvey Firestone, multi-millionaire head of the well-known Akron tyre

[1] The death of Sir Henry Wickham occurred while this book was in the Press.

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manufacturing corporation. Climatically, and in other respects, it would seem that Liberia is as good a place as Brazil to grow rubber in. That scheme, though, has never materialised. Quite alive to its menace if it did succeed, British producers have quietly observed its failure to do so for reasons which out of their own experience they could apprehend better than its promoters, but they got a little sick of all the bragging and blustering which accompanied the preliminaries, and so were stung to labelling Mr. Firestone, perhaps unkindly, as "the man who put the Lie in Liberia."

It is possible, of course, that this Para scheme is more than *blague*, that having put his hand, literally, to the plough, Mr. Ford will use more of his surplus millions to overcome obstacles and set-backs that his business experience will have warned him must attend the pioneer operations. Simultaneous clearing of the immense areas in question, or even a fair proportion of them, will be a colossal undertaking, even if the wealth of Crœsus is behind its direction. To suggest just one snag, has Mr. Ford made plans to deal with the malarial mosquito? After that must come road-making, clearing, planting, cultivation, and such stages of manufacture as are conducted in the factory.

Hevea braziliensis will certainly flourish in the Amazon belt, for that is where nature first planted it. Its occurrence, however, in the matted jungles which are its native home, is sporadic. It grows less in clumps than by way of individual trees. The Indians, of course, can locate these trees, but it has taken themselves and their ancestors about three hundred years to do so with precision. Latex collection, naturally in the circumstances, is the devil of a business, and the resultant product, "hard fine para" and the lower grades, actually less valuable now than plantation rubber in

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the world's markets. Research by tropical agriculturists has proved that rubber, although it requires much moisture, is intolerant of a permanently wet or damp soil or a high water table, such as is often present in low-lying districts. Nor will it usually flourish on steep hill-sides liable to continual denudation of humus by tropical rains unless heavily silt-pitted or contour-drained, as in the Jelebu district of Negri Sembilan, where the rubber, planted on steep hills up to 750 feet high, gives some of the highest yields in Malaya. Undulating, slightly hilly country, where soil and rainfall are alike propitious to its growth, provides the type of area best favourable to its development. Few zones in the tropics comprise such land in extensive and continuous blocks, and one wonders what sort of contour map Mr. Ford possesses of his four-million-acre domain.

Another vital factor in successful rubber cultivation is labour. If Malayan and Ceylon planters had to depend on the indigenes for the coolie work of their estates, they would all have to go out of business, both Malays and Sinhalese hating permanent routine. Ceylon relies on the immigrant Tamil, in the main and with all his faults, a hardy, industrious and reliable fellow. Infinite trouble and expense are required to recruit him, and to keep him healthy and happy once his services are secured. Malaya is more fortunate, having available the Tamil (under the same conditions) and also the large contiguous labour reservoirs of China and Java, whose inhabitants inherit both a penchant for agriculture and a natural amenability to discipline. But Mr. Ford must look elsewhere. The South American Indian, by all accounts, is of low physique and stamina. If Mr. Ford has other resources upon which he can make large drafts for labour purposes, I should be glad to know where they are. High wages may attract a

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few, even a good many, Filipinos, but it is hardly likely the Philippine Government will favour any scheme of extensive emigration. Does he "plan" to employ negroes? If they did not cotton to the job in Liberia, right at home, that is to say, with the old folks, will they visualise a happy life for themselves way down in old Para?

Honestly, I think not. But, of course, Mr. Ford may have other surprises up his sleeve. British producers must keep their eye on him.

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The fact that the rubber industry is in the throes of a crisis at the moment imparts a certain irony to the belated recognition its pioneers are now receiving.

The late Sir Henry Wickham, whose courage and enterprise secured (in 1876) the first seeds ever smuggled out of Brazil, was an old man when I first encountered him at Colombo, in the days of the original rubber boom.

He was then far, very far, from being a wealthy man, and no public honour of any description had come his way. It was only eight years ago that his knighthood was forthcoming, and an honorarium of £5000 from the rubber industry followed later still.

As I write these lines it is the turn of Mr. H. N. Ridley, F.R.S., formerly Director of the Botanic Gardens in Singapore, who has just been presented by the United States Consul General, Mr. Horace Lee Washington, on behalf of the American Genetic Association, with the Frank N. Meyer Medal for distinguished service in plant production, in his case rendered by the important part he played in establishing plantations of para rubber in the East.

In 1876, twenty-two seedlings just germinated from the Wickham consignment were received at the Botanic

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Gardens in Singapore from Kew, by Mr. Murton, the then Director. Some were established in the Economic Gardens, while nine were planted at Kuala Kangsar, Teluk Anson, and Matang, Mr. Murton taking a trip to Perak in October 1877 for that purpose. On his arrival in the Peninsula in 1888, Mr. Ridley immediately interested himself in the rubber block in the Singapore Economic Gardens. The various tapping methods experimented with, and their results, interested him intensely. He became a persistent propagandist of *hevea braziliensis* as a commercial crop, but found great difficulty in arousing other people's interest.

The story is still told in Malaya of how "Mad Ridley," or "Rubber Ridley," as he grew to be called, made a practice of carrying rubber seeds stored about his person on all occasions, and forcibly stuffing the same into the pockets of coffee-planters and others, whom his arguments that they too should participate in the great work of plantation rubber research failed otherwise to move.

The Kindersley brothers, one of whom is still a well-known planter in the Kajang district, seem to have been the first Europeans whom "Rubber Ridley" induced to make a serious trial with plantation rubber in the Malay Peninsula. The Chinese, always enterprising and interested in new industrial possibilities, quickly followed their lead. His compatriots claim for Tan Chay Yan of Malacca that he was the first practical rubber planter in the colony, and his rubber, grown at Bukit Lintang, was exhibited at the Malacca Exhibition in 1898. General interest in the product was first shown on this occasion, and it was only then that a general demand for seeds sprang up from planters all over the Peninsula. *Hevea* being a regular and prolific seeder, that was easily satisfiable, and in a

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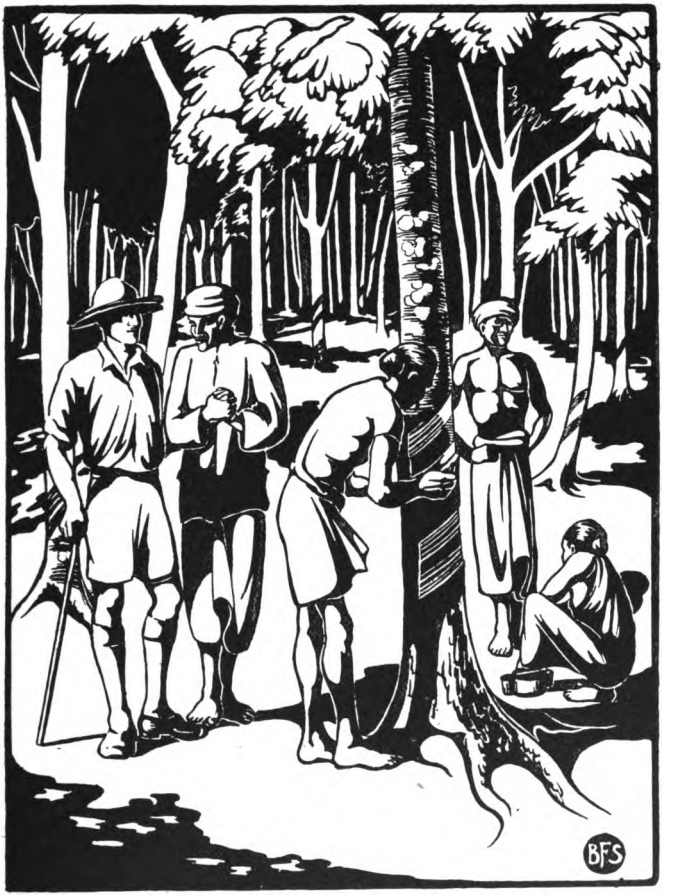

ON A RUBBER ESTATE

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decade or two rubber cultivation had become general throughout the length and breadth of British Malaya.

Even as late as 1905 the total of plantation rubber actually produced was only 200 tons, this against the export (mainly from Brazil) of 60,000 tons of "wild" rubber. But when the war came, nine years later, the plantation output had drawn level. And at the present moment it is 95 per cent of the world's total. British Malaya's exports of locally-produced rubber for the last four years, roughly speaking, throughout the period of restriction, latterly down to 60 per cent of standard production, have been:

1924	167,696 tons
1925	182,942 „
1926	278,228 „
1927	243,250 „

There are between three and four hundred plantations (mostly European-owned) of over one hundred acres in each of the states of Perak, Selangor, and Negri Sembilan, nearly two hundred in Malacca, and about ninety in Pahang, while Province Wellesley and the Dindings have between them about the same number.

Tapping methods have been much improved. The old process of superimposed V-cuts was wasteful and damaging to the trees. Slumps and restriction have had their uses as factors in promoting economy, and the now general practice is alternate day tapping on a V-cut over half the circumference of young rubber and a quarter circumference in the case of old trees. A coolie taps three to four hundred trees a day, accounting for from four to ten estate acres, according to the method of planting employed. He empties the latex cups clipped to the trees into his pail as he goes, the full pails are brought back and their latex contents

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bulked in the factory. Water is added, and acetic acid for coagulation, which process takes from three to eight hours. A sort of mangling operation converts the rubber into long strips, which are hung up and air-dried in the drying shed. Only the short sheets are put in the "smoke house."

Whereas the vogue used to be for "smoked sheet," the bulk of prepared rubber now leaves the factories as "pale crêpe," in which form most manufacturers prefer to deal with it. "Pale crêpe" in fact requires little further attention for many of the more modern usages of rubber, the soles of tennis shoes for instance, and in this guise millions of people, who have never seen a rubber-tree or plantation factory, must be familiar with it.

An interesting recent development is the exporting of latex in tanks (2,000,000 gallons in 1926), thus cutting out factory costs on the estate, natural coagulation being prevented by the admixture of ammonia. Trials are being made with a further improvement, concentrated or desiccated latex, which can be converted to the proper consistency by the addition of water at its journey's end, in London or Ohio perhaps. Enormous savings in freight charges are here promised.

The Wilkinson Process, already in operation in Malaya, adds to latex the ingredients of a secret formula, and by special treatment evolves a very cheap product that is practically everlasting, and can be devoted to manifold uses, particularly in the parts of mining machinery exposed to constant erosion.

There have been marked improvements of late years in methods of rubber cultivation. The labours of research chemists (there is now a fully equipped Research Institute run by the industry itself in Kuala Lumpur) have done much to check the diseases and pests to

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whose attacks growing rubber is peculiarly liable, and the working planter is kept continually in touch with new theories and discoveries.

Bud-grafting and the selection of seeds for new planting from high-yielding trees have been the subjects of experiment for some years. Several enterprising proprietors have looked far ahead in this matter, and there is promise that their initiative will be very well rewarded.

Though unfortunate circumstances may combine at the moment to keep the Malayan rubber industry marking time in a state of acute depression, there seems to be no doubt that with the constant growth of motor traffic throughout the world, the new uses of rubber as constantly coming into being, the increasing efficiency in production methods, and economies in costs, *hevea braziliensis* will maintain itself for many years as the backbone of Malayan agriculture.

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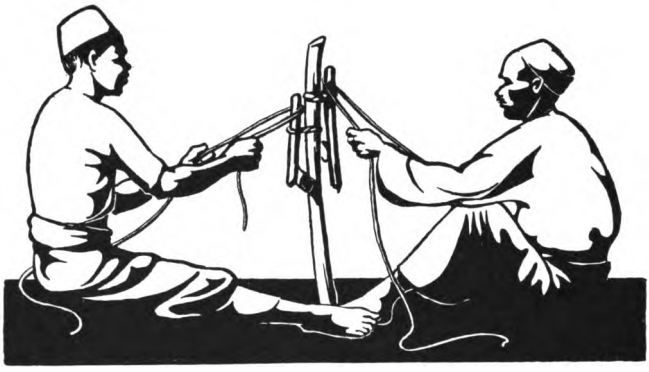

CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURE AND MINING

After rubber, and a very long way behind, coconuts have ranked for many years as Malaya's second staple agricultural product. Much European capital is invested in these "Consols of the East." Mostly, the best results are obtained from planting in the alluvial coast soils, where the humus is impregnated with salt, and the peaty texture of the ground seems to suit the trees. For scores of miles along Malaya's western littoral the tidewash of the Malacca Straits breaks gently at high water about the boles of serried coconut palms. This mild erosion, coupled with the effects of recurrent high winds known as "Sumatras," naturally takes a certain toll of the trees along the seaward fringe of many plantations—seventy or eighty to the mile per annum I believe is a usual average. Sometimes it is more. I knew an imprudent planter once who, on coming back from the war, chose as his "hundred acres" of freehold (returned ex-service men were then being

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granted this amount of land by Government) a very long strip of coast land no more than two chains in width. At the end of eighteen months most of the nuts he planted had floated out to sea.

The big estates, however, do well. The increase in consumption and manufacture of margarine since the war provides a steady market for dried copra and its expressed oil. Malayan nuts average four thousand to the ton of copra, as against six to eight thousand in most other producing countries, which partly explains perhaps why little or no interest is taken in the valuable by-product of coir fibre, extensively milled and exported from Ceylon, while Malaya actually imports it. Not only English, but considerable foreign capital, especially Danish, has been sunk in Malayan coconut estates.

Wet rice cultivation is a Malay monopoly, but remains the third most important staple industry. Only in Krian (where an irrigation scheme provides water for 60,000 acres) and one or two other districts are really large areas consistently cultivated, and there is nothing comparable to the careful husbandry one sees in Java, with its terraced mountains treasuring every inch of irrigable soil, or (on a much inferior scale) in Ceylon as one approaches Kandy by the Kadugannawa Pass. Rice is the staple food of 99 per cent of Malaya's population, yet the country, despite its relatively small population, only produces five-eighths of its requirements. Our Government, however, does everything it can to foster the Malays' interest in rice cultivation. At Titi Serong selected strains, yielding nearly 30 per cent above the productive average, have been isolated, and are being distributed to the Malay cultivators.

It is possible that as rich a harvest as Malaya already reaps from coconuts may be won in a very few years

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from a comparatively new industry, the African oil-palm. One large plantation is already functioning satisfactorily at Tennamaram, and others are on the way to do so. The cultivation and manufacturing methods adopted are found to yield a higher quality oil than the African product. Rubber slumps have emphasised the danger of an agricultural country placing all its eggs in one basket, and, mindful of this, the Government has reserved 100,000 acres for oil-palm cultivation, 30,000 acres of which have been taken over, and half this area already planted.

Several fibre plants, Mauritius and Manila hemp, Roselle (a hibiscus yielding strong, cotton-like floss), have shown promising results upon investigations conducted by certain enterprising planters and by the Government, of whose experimental stations the largest is at Serdang, about an hour's drive from Kuala Lumpur, which for its economic interest and natural beauties, including the "Blue Lagoon" beloved of bathers, is worth a visit. Here you can see the extraordinarily pretty little cocaine plant flourishing most vigorously. Its private cultivation is naturally forbidden, and Government has not yet decided to establish a commercial cultivation of its own to meet the demands of drug manufacturers, a potential source of much revenue.

It ought to be explained here perhaps that the country's opium revenue, target of late years for a good deal of criticism on account of its providing, in the Straits Settlements, no less than 40 per cent of the Treasury's total income, is not derived from any local manufacture, but from the sale of the imported product of the Indian- or Persian-grown poppy. This sale is very carefully controlled. The large Chinese community has heretofore insisted that an opium supply is essential to its welfare, and when not obtainable

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by lawful means they exhaust every device of ingenuity to circumvent the police and excise authorities in procuring by illegitimate means the anodyne they look on as a necessity of existence.

In face of these difficulties the Government has done extraordinarily good work in minimising the dangers of abuse and adulteration, and there seems every likelihood that in a few years the opium evil may be extirpated altogether. Under the League of Nations scheme, a gradual reduction in supply, eventually to vanishing point, has been guaranteed, as the measures for its diminution gradually come into operation.

Malayan tapioca used to be the best in the world. Like other crops, it was largely ousted from favour by the more profitable rubber, but is being taken up again, largely by Chinese, who are also reviving the once extensive pineapple-canning industry. Other starchy plants than the tapioca, yams, sweet potatoes and Jerusalem artichokes for instance, yield both alcohol and sugar, as do the Nipah and other palms whose growth is plentiful, and there are possibilities of great industrial expansion in these directions.

The success of rubber has overshadowed gutta percha, but there are qualities peculiar to this product which give it a unique value for certain purposes, notably the manufacture of submarine cables. It was formerly collected by Dyaks in various parts of the Peninsula from jungle trees, of which the dwindling supply is now being carefully husbanded by the Forest Department, and attention given to new planting and care of the mature trees (a more beautiful growth than rubber, and rather delicate), scientific tapping methods, and so forth.

Twenty years ago sugar-canes were extensively cultivated, and enough small native plantations and

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garden patches remain to keep the local Asiatic market supplied. Most Orientals have a sweet tooth, and one constantly meets coolies and Malay or Chinese children masticating large lengths of cane as they go about their business. The fashion is to consume these and mangoes (in their season) on the march, whereas the odoriferous durian must be tackled sitting down, in a more serious and ceremonial spirit.

It is doubtful if sugar cultivation on a commercial scale, as still practised by the Dutch throughout many parts of Insulinde, will be revived in the Peninsula. An overhaul of cultivation and manufacturing methods will be very necessary if this does happen.

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I have met many people who on visiting the tropics for the first time have fallen victims to the lush allurements of the papaya (*Carica papaya*). I did myself, in West Africa, where the "paw-paw" (bisected, not "sliced," for the essential concomitants of lime and sugar must be retained, cup-fashion, down to the ultimate drop) ousted all rivals as an accompaniment of early tea. Personally, I found, like many others, that its exotic attraction soon palled, though one clung to the thing as a habit from the conviction that here was something which, garnished or *au naturel*, insipid or full-flavoured, was, in the words of the cook's testimonial, "good for master's body." And good, in that utilitarian sense, it certainly is. You can sneer at the papaya as a weed that not only can grow, but insists on growing, on practically every dust-heap, that asks no care or thought from the horticulturist, but seeds itself indiscriminately, rearing a mushy trunk (you can uproot the thing when full grown with a determined push and, if ill-advised enough to attempt climbing

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it, it will let you down in every sense of the word) and insolently sappy crown oblivious of droughts or the uttermost sterility of soil. But it will persist in producing fruit abounding in remarkable digestive properties, of the sort that most people can eat daily for a month and find palatable if not delicious, and are still able to consume without distaste after years of familiarity.

The peculiar virtue of the plant from a medicinal point of view is that every fibre of it, root, branch, leaf, and fruit, teems with pure natural pepsin. Why then have recourse to artificial or synthetic substitutes out of bottles, which are expensive to buy and rapidly deteriorate in the very climate that fosters the papaya's luxuriant growth? It is not only the actual fruit that is the friend of man, and I wonder how many people, even in Malaya, are aware of the peculiar virtue of papaya leaves, in that if one shoots small game that must be eaten tough, within an hour or two of killing, or not eaten at all, a bird wrapped up tightly in papaya leaves and strung up in the shade becomes as tender in three hours as a well, but not too well, hung pheasant?

Furthermore, there is the testimony of Lord Harris, who brought a consignment back with him from the West Indies, for the fact that the remnant of his Trinidad stock was "in good condition" on landing in England. That seems to show that his suggestion for putting the papaya on the Covent Garden Market in sufficient quantities to make importation a reasonable commercial proposition is not altogether chimerical. The mangosteen, which Queen Victoria to her regret could never procure, and about which Hickey rhapsodises in his *Memoirs*, will not survive the trip even in cold storage, but it seems the papaya may.

In days when every possible chance of a new industry demands to be thoroughly tested and explored, the

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Malayan Agricultural Department might give serious attention to the possibilities connoted by Lord Harris's appeal. No doubt the papaya, neglected and plebeian vegetable as it is, would well repay scientific attention regarding seed-selection, reaction to differences in soil, climate, etc. Even if the notion of placing the fruit itself on the European market proves impracticable, there are always possibilities in the extraction of the essential pepsin on the spot.

Tropical fruits always disappoint the new-comer. No exotic flavouring really approaches that of our own home-grown raspberries and strawberries, or the peaches and nectarines, even the oranges, of Covent Garden. Many sorts of oranges grow in Malaya, but only one, a Chinese variety from Singapore, is really worth eating. Much the same criticism applies to the bananas, which are much inferior to the best West Indian kinds. Greater discrimination in selecting strains for planting would no doubt lead to better results. In most places, for example, the small and delicately flavoured bronze-skinned variety (if it has a name of its own I cannot trace it) is unprocurable for love or money.

I have spoken of mangosteens and durians, papayas and pineapples. Guavas are obtainable, but not very common. Other Malay fruits have their European votaries, the potato-like chiku, the duku, the giant orange called pomelo (good when really ripe), the pulasan, the hairy rambutan, up on the hills the passion fruit. Limes are grown everywhere, and for all culinary and household uses take the place of lemons. Soursops lend a peculiar but rather attractive flavour to ice puddings and "soft" drinks. Other fruits too are suitable for stewing or preserving, but are rarely so treated.

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The sago palm is widely distributed, but only grown on a commercial scale in Johore. Its leaves supply the best "attap" for roofing.

Tuba root (derris) has always been used by the Malays for stupefying fish in the rivers preparatory to their "drives," which are as much a ceremonial sport as fox-hunting with us. A valuable insecticide can be distilled from certain varieties of this plant, and the European and Australian markets now assimilate regular supplies of it.

Cloves and nutmegs, once, with pepper, the principal exports of Penang and Singapore, have had their day, though the Malays and Chinese still keep their cultivation alive.

Citronella and lemon-grass are grown on hill-sides in rubber and other plantations to prevent soil erosion, and their essential oil distilled. Patchouli and vetiver are also raised. In view of the success the Dutch have had with quinine (cinchona) cultivation in Java, and the tremendous local and general demand for the drug in malaria treatment, etc., there is a possibility of Government's starting systematic cultivation on their own account. Small crops have now and again been raised by Malayan planters, sometimes very profitably.

Coffee, extensively grown before the "blight" of the 'eighties and 'nineties, is still cultivated to a certain extent. The Liberian variety seems hardier than the quicker-growing and more productive Robusta, but only does well at low elevations.

Every Malay grows one or two areca palms to supply his needs, for it is this nut, with betel leaf, a pinch of lime and sometimes gambier, that forms the favourite "chew" of Orientals throughout British India, Malaya and Indo-China. Johore plantations, Chinese-owned, export large quantities of these nuts to India. The

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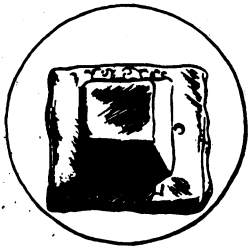
areca is a singularly graceful palm, slender and straight as a Venetian mast.

. . . . . .

Malaya's second largest industry is mining. Its rocks and alluvial deposits hold tin, coal, gold, and a few rarities like tungsten, wolfram, scheelite, monazite, and China clay, but of all these minerals there is only one that really matters, and that is tin. In the first five years of this century our tiny Peninsula produced more than half the complete world's output of tin, in 1903, 1904 and 1908 averaging over fifty thousand tons, and, despite the discovery and development of the Nigerian fields, Malaya still produces over 30 per cent. True, tin is a wasting asset, and intensive prospecting has very much reduced the untested areas, but much land now under rubber remains to be worked over, and sooner or later is bound to be so dealt with. I have described something of the outward aspect of tin-mining in a previous chapter.



On the tin-mines the whole labour force is Chinese, has always been Chinese. Speaking of what their labour in this regard has accomplished for the development of the country, Sir Frank Swettenham pays them an eloquent tribute in *British Malaya*: "It was the Chinese who began the work, who have continued it ever since, and whose efforts have succeeded in producing more than half of the world's tin supply [he wrote in 1907]. Their energy and enterprise have made the Malay States what they are to-day. . . . They were already the miners and traders, and in some cases the planters and fishermen, before the white man had found his way

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CHINESE TIN-MINING

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to the Peninsula. . . . They have driven their way into remote jungles, cleared the forest, run all risks, and often made great gains. They have also paid the penalty imposed by an often deadly climate. . . . Not only miners, they were charcoal-burners in the days when they had to do their own smelting; they were wood-cutters, carpenters, and brick-makers; as contractors they constructed nearly all the Government buildings, most of the roads and bridges, railways and waterworks. They brought all the capital into the country when Europeans feared to take the risk; they were the traders and shopkeepers, and it was their steamers which first opened communications between the ports of the Colony and the ports of the Malay States."

. . . . . .

Coal was discovered not very many years ago at Rantau Panjang, twenty-five miles from Kuala Lumpur, and the output from this mine, known as the Malayan Collieries, has risen from 170,000 tons in 1918 to 456,522 tons in 1926. The coal is not particularly high grade, but well adapted to the needs of the Federated Malay States Railway, which, with one or two other local industries, absorbs practically the whole output. There is another small coal-mine at Enggor, in Perak.

Gold has been worked from primitive times in Malaya. At Selinsing, near the Jelai River (Pahang), the remains of old gold workings attributed by the Malays to "the men of Siam" can still be seen. Actually, they are probably older than the existing Siamese race, and from the evidences of mechanical skill they provide would seem to have been made by Mon immigrants seven or eight centuries ago. In the fifteenth century gold-mining was certainly conducted in Pahang, for the earliest Portuguese writer on Malacca (Barbosa,

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A.D. 1518) speaks of it. In 1727 Captain Hamilton stated that the Pahang gold output, won, as he related, by Malays who dived for it in the rivers, was 8 cwt. in some years, half the highest recorded output of 1927. A hundred years ago gold amounting to over 19,000 oz. was being systematically won in Pahang, Trengganu, Kelantan, Pekan, and elsewhere.

But the work of gold-mining was always arduous and ill-paid, and tin has practically ousted it. At Raub in Pahang an Australian company continues to work the only gold-mine in Malaya still being exploited by Europeans. The use of hydro-electric power here makes it possible to keep costs low. The annual production of this mine is about 14,000 oz. Malaya's total gold output for the last twenty years is about 313,000 oz.

A really big "strike" of gold in Malaya, though rather improbable, is always a possibility.

Few residents of long standing in the country but have been bitten, at one period or another, by the proverbial "gold bug." Unfortunately, it might be more correct in the great majority of cases to say "stung." Enterprising friends of theirs, animated by the pioneering spirit, friends whose *bona fides* were above the breath of suspicion, have returned from mysterious sojourns in the jungle with their pockets bulging with authentic nuggets, not of exactly virgin gold perhaps, but ore the creditably auriferous character of which has hardly needed the confirmation of experts. Syndicates have been formed, gold has been extracted, a little gold, then a little less, then no gold, the syndicates have evaporated, and their money with them. That is the melancholy history of nine "strikes" out of ten in this country. "Yes, we have no bonanzas," might be the melancholy slogan with which we could greet, if so minded, the generation that has followed us,

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optimists to a man, as new generations mostly are. But we are not so utterly disillusioned as to believe that there never can be a bonanza—in Malaya.

Success in gold-mining depends on many factors. Though disclaiming any expert authority I can boast myself the possessor of a trifle or two of experience on the practical side. I too have walked in the gold-seeker's Arcady of a tropical forest, have been bitten, and stung, and half-drowned, and half-baked, and generally scarified in the quest of El Dorado; have known what it means to bray the gravel of deserts and the sands of jungle waterways in a mortar, rotate the trencher with practised wrist and watch for the ultimate glimmer that may be mica, or half a dozen other things, not excluding gold. Actually, repeating these operations like the Wild Westerner in the films, I have carried the parallel so far as to *find* gold. But that was not in Malaya. And it was gold in the proportion of two and a half pennyweights to the ton, many hundreds of miles from a railway, scores of miles from any form of usable timber, and far beyond the zone of any population that might by any means have been utilised as a labour force. That particular deposit remains where I and some friends of mine found, and left, it.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE ENGLISHMAN'S DAY

ENGLISH people still cherish a number of extraordinarily wrong ideas about Malaya. I hope I have scotched some of the worst geographical heresies in an earlier chapter. Several deeply engrained misconceptions of another type seem, however, to be universal among acquaintances of mine who have never been there, and the zone of ignorance extends very much beyond the home circle. Ceylon, for example, remains dreadfully uninformed about its next-door neighbour, calls the whole territory "The Straits," for one thing, absurdly under-estimates its area and potentialities, and yet believes that by comparison with itself living there is cheap and fortunes easily won. The stay-at-home Englishman thinks so too, likewise nursing the conviction that his compatriots in Malaya lead such lonely, unhealthy lives that only indecently large salaries will tempt them to stay in the country; that they generally die there, and if they do manage to creep home with a spark of life in them, never survive long to enjoy the benefits of their hard-gotten gains.

These notions are strangely at variance with the facts. Whatever the case may have been thirty or forty years ago, life for a European in Malaya is neither lonely (the motor-car having abolished distance) nor particularly unwholesome now that the Health Depart-

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ment has coped so successfully with the anophelines. Unpleasant and outlandish ailments may, of course, lay one low occasionally, while in the other scale must be laid the constant opportunities available for healthy exercise, and the exceptionally high standard of medical skill almost everywhere available. These considerations apply, of course, to the areas where Europeans are settled. Naturally, if you elect to go and lose yourself in Pahang or Kelantan jungles you will encounter extra hazards. Few people go to Malaya purely for pleasure or adventure, or even in search of employment. One's niche is arranged for one before the steamer ticket is taken. Landing up in it, you can be sure that a fairly jolly life awaits you, unless you are an exceptionally bad "mixer."

But this jolly life is deucedly expensive, unless you are assured from your arrival of the princely emoluments of a *tuan besar*. The standard of living set by custom for the married *tuan kechil* is practically identical with his chief's. In Malaya to-day, a bachelor's economic minimum of expenditure is $300 a month; a childless married couple's, $500 or $600. A monthly stipend of $1000 is esteemed a very good salary, and no great number of heads of families draw much more, while many rub along on considerably less. All Government employees, whether of the covenanted or "cadet" service, the Police, the Medical Department, or the professional and technical branches, draw practically equal pay for equal seniority and service, roughly from three or four hundred to eight hundred dollars a month, with possible but quite problematical ascensions to $1200 or perhaps more for heads of departments or specially recruited experts. A dollar is 2s. 4d. at the (fixed) exchange rate for English money, but as the

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Colonial Office very properly emphasises whenever it advertises in *The Times* for new recruits for the railway or P.W.D., this coin's local purchasing power is considerably less, not much more indeed than that of a shilling in England. Government also allots its married employees a compassionate allowance (an extra 10 per cent on salary), and priority of claim upon house accommodation and so forth.

Europeans in private employment (commerce, the banks, the law) are on the average slightly better paid perhaps than their contemporaries in the public service. But of these only the bank staffs can definitely rely on obtaining pensions. Conversely, planters, except in "star" billets, receive rather less, though they profit by the use of free quarters. They have, however, organised their forces in recent years, and extracted somewhat more generous terms from estate proprietors. Yet in slump times shareholders have to be considered, and the average planter's career is not the steady climb to prosperity, even to security, that his efforts and application perhaps deserve.

Outside Government, to whose employees local investments are very rightly *tabu*, it is, of course, open to anybody to dabble in the more or less speculative market that industrial enterprise provides in every country still in process of development. Fortunes, certainly, have been made quickly in rubber, in tin, coconuts, and all sorts of odd commodities, by Malayan residents who started their operations with a capital of perhaps five hundred dollars. And very, very many nest-eggs have thus been lost. Most people who retire to England in a state of greater or less affluence have done so not on the carefully garnered accumulations of their pay, but by virtue of haphazard winnings "on

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the side." To achieve that good fortune one requires to be born lucky, and to be on the spot while some species of "boom" is in progress. Booms are at a discount, just now, in the Peninsula.

. . . . . .

The conditions of your daily life in Malaya will be governed by the character of your job. If you are a *sinne dorai*, or junior planter, you must get up at five, attend the coolies' muster, spend long hours of the forenoon tramping the estate (perhaps a motor-bike will help you if it is a large and scattered one with several outlying divisions), and so home to a bath, tiffin, and knowledge perhaps that your day's work has finished at three. Naturally the *periyar dorai*, or manager, has less running about; but a great deal of office work, factory supervision, etc., will fall to his lot, and his finger must be on the pulse of every estate activity.

Office-workers are at their desks by eight-thirty or nine, and except in the Government establishments (whose staffs may have papers to take home or be led on walks abroad before breakfast by official business) rarely get away before five or half-past. The weekly "mail-day," whose manifold correspondence duties probably include the dispatch of comprehensive reports on the week's work to London headquarters, entails really hard slogging, perhaps with the thermometer at 90° in the shade.

The evenings, however, are deliciously cool, and from five to six-thirty everybody who can do so plays games. There is not a centre of European population in Malaya lacking in facilities for this sort of thing, and the standard of golf, tennis, cricket, and Rugby and Association

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football is really very high indeed. Malayan tennis champions are sometimes seen at Wimbledon. Among non-European residents, both Chinese and Japanese excel at this game, and a year or two ago Hooi Hye, a young Chinese, won the singles championship of the Peninsula, and still, I believe, retains it. The Malays take a keen interest in European sporting contests of every description, always provide a numerous and enthusiastic "gate," and are themselves, like the Chinese and Indians, no mean exponents of the Association football game. There are also good cricketers among the small Sikh community.

European women are well to the fore in tennis and golf. At Kuala Lumpur, where the Selangor Golf Club possesses one of the finest courses in the East (ringed by mountains, the view from the back veranda at twilight has a really startling beauty), there are twenty-seven holes available for play, but on most afternoons it is hard to get round your full eighteen, and after dusk the bridge enthusiasts (which means everybody) are busy till it is time, or more than time, for the car to whirl you home to dinner. Club life makes this, in the towns and larger out-stations, a movable and as a rule tiresomely late function.

Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Ipoh, Taiping, and Seremban all have their racecourses. Malaya practically supports a full team of professional jockeys, mostly Australian. A few amateur riders win fame for themselves, but not so many as in Ceylon. Malaya is not really an equestrian country; it is odd, for instance, to find the commissioned police ranks are not supplied with mounts, though they draw, of course, car or motor-bike allowances.

Every planting district has a club of sorts, whose attractions consist of hard tennis courts, bridge-rooms

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(probably one for men and one for women—Malayan clubs being great on segregation of the sexes), a billiard-table, a large and sociable veranda whereon the sexes *do* mingle, and the real focus of every Colonial Englishman's club, namely the bar.

The Lake Club at Kuala Lumpur is very proud of its swimming-bath, highly popular on Sunday mornings. This resort, charmingly sited on a hill-top in the lovely Lake Gardens, is by way of being exclusive. The Selangor Club, centrally situated and facing the Government Offices, is "everybody's" club. Its 2000 membership enables it to give you a lot for your $5 a month. Since the war, constant accretions have swelled its one-time modest premises to quite palatial dimensions, now blocking almost an entire side of Kuala Lumpur's *padang*, or playing-field, with grand-stand accommodation to witness all sporting encounters thereupon, half a dozen first-class billiard-tables, card-rooms, reading-rooms, the famous long bar, and a lofty pillared lounge that when converted into a ball-room holds five hundred people comfortably and often squeezes in more not so comfortably, so constantly are its amenities in request for the elaborate fancy-dress revels still very much in vogue. Sometimes the Town Hall, which is equipped with a stage and dressing-rooms, where visiting theatrical companies usually give their performances, is requisitioned for these junketings. The pride Singapore takes in possessing its own real theatre is discounted by the unprofitableness of this fine building's upkeep. Latter-day passenger rates very much restrict what used to be the constant *va-et-vient* of touring companies through the Far East.

Singapore and Penang, and all the smaller townships proportionately to their size, are equally well off for clubs. Some people, indeed, consider that in Malaya club life

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absorbs too much of the European's spare time, and incidentally his cash, and there have been campaigns from time to time for a "back-to-the-bungalow" crusade. There is not, in fact, nearly so much entertaining at home as might be looked for. When this does happen, it mostly takes the form of concerted orgies of bridge, which some hostesses organise to excess, not only collecting their friends for these exercises when breakfast is hardly off the table, but vying with one another in the concomitants of refreshment that appear in consort with the cards and bridge-markers. Cocktails, ices, bon-bons, and highly elaborate *kechil makan*—I have known all these produced by an ultra-fashionable hostess at one of these little eleven o'clock in the week-day morning flutters, but most people voted the display a vulgar one, and fortunately that seems to remain the general view.

The excuse such good ladies have, of course, is that the long Malayan day, while their husbands are absent at work and convention bars their taking a hand seriously in household activities, grows excessively boring as the novelty of Malayan life evaporates. Of course there is shopping. But not of the early morning marketing type, which for certain obvious reasons is best left to "cookie." With the up-to-date establishments of people like outfitters and milliners all large or largish towns in Malaya are well provided. Purchases here are nearly always made on credit; thus economy is not studied as it might be, and for many reasons it is better to confine this sort of shopping to sudden emergencies.

It will really be found more sensible and satisfactory to supply most of one's requirements by mail order from home. This does not apply to the purchase of silks and Oriental fabrics generally; such things, cheap

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and of good quality, being available in many of the native shops run by Indians or Chinese. There *are* men's tailors capable of producing uncanny replicas of Bond Street's best (in light washing and "Palm Beach" fabrics, of course) at a couple of days' notice and a very modest fee, but they want looking for. Boots and shoes represent the cheapest "bespoke" bargains. This is a Chinese monopoly. Local leathers, including the skins of various snakes and monitor lizards, are cheap, and workmanship cheaper, and you can go excellently shod for $8 or less. Such footwear will look very neat, but has not the lasting qualities of good English work.

Out-station life, naturally, is bound to be dull for women in the day-time. The custom is to sleep ("lie-off" in vulgar parlance) more or less through the whole afternoon up till tea-time, probably a necessary solace in view of the climate and customary late hours, yet this sort of relaxation can be overdone, with damaging results both physical and mental. The men anyway—barring planters, who may have spent a hectic morning among the tappers or in some shadeless new clearing—have no time for such luxuries, yet seem nevertheless to wear better, on the average, than their womenfolk.

. . . . . .

A hobby European housewives can be recommended to take up in Malaya is gardening. If they have been used to it at home, so much the better, but I know many garden enthusiasts in Malaya who gathered all their now extensive knowledge of horticulture after arrival in the country. That way one need never be bored, for the Malayan garden functions all the year round. Heat and humidity, conditions so constant as to be very trying in other ways, do at least give you

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results for whatever trouble you take in trying to improve your out-of-doors environment.

Nor do you have long to wait for these rewards. Malayan soil, though often poor in residential areas (laterite and "tin tailings" will demand much fortification with manure), will grow most ornamental plants and flowers native to the tropics or semi-tropics in prodigal profusion. Provided your *kebun* develops some understanding of their vagaries, you may achieve wonderful mass effects with cannas, of which at least eighty different varieties are procurable. Standard hibiscus can exhibit the diversity of the English rose. At higher altitudes you will notice many old favourites brightening the gardens of your friends. Salvia and nasturtium make gorgeous splashes of colour round the hill bungalows of Bukit Fraser. Roses do fairly well there, better at Taiping.

I like gardening myself, but will not here inflict my theories on you, because there is a whole book about gardening in Malaya written by a very considerable expert, Mrs. Gough of Kajang, quite lately published by Witherby's, which you should certainly acquire if you are keen.

The Chinese are immensely interested in plants and flowers. The poorer sort of Chinese grow vegetables for the market, and do very well with them; the prosperous and leisured class devote tremendous attention to their gardens, and pour out their dollars recklessly in the acquisition of imported rarities. If you want cuttings, I should advise you to make friends with the *towkays* in your neighbourhood.

And they are only too glad to show you their treasures. European visitors are always welcome at the delightful pleasure-grounds laid out on the cool heights of Ginting Simpah by Mr. Choo Kia Peng, formerly a Chinese Mem-

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ber of the Federal Council. It was he who rang me up on the telephone one night in Kuala Lumpur, and wanted to know if I would come round to his town house, at once. He thought I might like to see his Keng Hua plant achieve the annual miracle of its midnight blossoming. One must call to do that in the middle of the night, or not at all. These wonder-flowers never see the sun. Born upon the midnight, their beauty dies before dawn.

Would I not?

So, with a friend or two, I drove round at the appointed hour. We missed, alas, the supreme moment, the bursting of these great cactus buds ("night-blooming cereus" is their botanists' name) almost in unison, a strange acceleration of the processes of normal plant life which only the films can stage for you with any other species.

That night, the Keng Huas flowered an hour before their time. Perhaps the wet weather.

But how wonderful they were, in their full burgeoning! Faint movements still continued among their great waxen petals as Japanese photographers with flashlights hurried to catch and immortalise the acme of their loveliness.

White flowers bigger than peonies, the palest stain of pink and sulphur at their hearts, sighing out the ghost of perfume, elusive suspiration of rose and ambergris.

By morning, a few rags and tatters of sallow blotting-paper.

. . . . . .

There is only one announcement in the excellent handbook of useful information about the Peninsula that the Malay States Information Agency have lately brought out with which I do not agree. This is the

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allegation that "the servant problem has certainly not yet reached Malaya." The hand of some Government pensioner or retired rubber magnate might be suspected here, for the *tuan besar's* suite shares vicariously in his prestige, and there is competition for the jobs in his bestowal. Servants in the "good old times" may have been paragons, and we know they were cheap. But no, this writer goes on to admit that "wages have increased considerably since the war." They are now, in fact, something like this:

For a houseboy . . .	20 to 30	dollars	per month
„ *tukang ayer* (water-carrier)	14 to 18	„	„
„ cook	25 to 35	„	„
„ *sais* (chauffeur) . .	30 to 35	„	„
„ *ayah* (Indian nurse), or „ *amah* (Chinese nurse)	25 to 40	„	„
„ *dhoby* (washerman) .	15 to 20 [1]	„	„

These are all essential units of the staff required by a European family, and $170 a month is £20!

There are, of course, good and faithful servants to be recruited if one is fortunate. These may be Chinese, Malays, Javanese or Tamils. Malays make the best personal boys, once they become attached to their masters; the Chinese are better in jobs about the house, and usually clean and competent in the kitchen. Tamil cooks are sometimes exceptionally good. Curiously, the Malays have taken to motor-cars like ducks to water, and with a very short course of training develop into good mechanics and chauffeurs.

Most Malay boys seem to be called "Mat" (short for Ahmat or Mahomet), and Chinese "Ah Wong." Chinese *tukangs*, carpenters and so forth, are generally "John."

But I very much fear that in these days the bad servants

[1] On contract. A cheap item.

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THE BACK VERANDA

(Boy, Cookie, *Amah*, and the *Tukang Ayer*)

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outnumber the good. We are close, you see, to China, and most of our Chinese boys are Hailams (not a very aristocratic clan), and subject in these troubled times to political influences obnoxious enough to undermine the most excellent relations of master and man.

. . . . . .

A particularly exasperating feature of domestic employment conventions is that which leaves out of the count a servant's responsibility to give an employer he wishes to desert reasonable notice. A boy, of indifferent qualifications, presents himself for engagement, at the end of the third day extracts as much *wang* in advance as his employer is soft-hearted enough to relinquish, and on the fourth or fifth day announces his intending departure to Malacca, where his presence is required to wind up the estate of a deceased great-aunt. Wishing not to inconvenience the *tuan*, he has ventured to introduce a substitute, of qualifications even inferior. The substitute puts in a prompt requisition for *wang*, and if he does not hit it off with the cook, another great-aunt dies, in Johore this time; more perjury ensues, and, worst of all, more substitutes, of an incredible incompetence. This kind of thing can apparently go on indefinitely.

A procession of such miscreants will actually invade your office towards the end of the month, all clamorously demanding *wang*. Urged by what novelists call "a sense of impending disaster," you are probably moved at this stage to take stock of your wardrobe, a measure of precaution for which the chances are that you can rarely summon up the requisite energy. Your worst forebodings are realised, two-thirds of your choicest and most expensive *lingerie* having passed completely out of ken. The *dhoby* knows nothing about it, probably

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there have been several of him, recruited for an illicit consideration by each of your late hirelings in turn.

So much for the common or garden "boy." The technical specialists are no better, probably worse. It is a general, if not actually a universal practice among the race of gardeners or *kebuns*, to ignore most of the instructions given by an employer, and to display initiative on their own account only in the most malevolent and bizarre directions (they will sink a chain of circular pits in your cherished grass patch in one morning that suggest a school of moles having suddenly run *amok*). The water coolie, or *tukang ayer*, develops creeping palsy when told to clean the bath as well as fill it, and resigns his appointment on urgent medical grounds. The cook, not content with his 20 per cent commission on your *kira*, levies a piratical toll on your groceries, and, should you complain, deliberately mishandles your expensive joint from the Cold Storage, an occurrence the more infuriating because you know he *can* cook when he likes. Your car *eats* petrol, oil, and tyres, and develops a clamant need for expensive repairs at least once a week.

In brief, under present conditions, the average Malayan resident in fairly modest circumstances hardly gets a square deal from his servants. For does he not divide among six able-bodied adults as much work as is, even in post-war days, accomplished by many a stout-hearted European "tweenie," paying each the average wage of a competent parlour-maid? Housed, after the hovels of their antecedent days, at least as well as regimental sergeant-majors, living at least as well as fighting-cocks, they revel in electric light,

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mosquito curtains, incessant bathing facilities, as much food as they can either eat themselves or maintain their families and friends upon, and (anyway in every case of service in a bachelor's bungalow) at least eighteen hours per diem available for slumber, gambling, gallantry, or any customary recreation or diversion of their kind.

All the same, there are a few good servants left in Malaya. If you are lucky, they may even become *your* servants.

. . . . . .

The House that John built

Among a host of others two illusions stand out, from a motley array of such cherished by the new-comer in Malaya, as something else that will have to go. Both concern John Chinaman. It is not nice Chinamen, or Chinese, as they prefer to call themselves, that I refer to, but the type that one might describe elsewhere as the "labouring class." Labour, properly so called, is the last thing such people will indulge in on our behalf, though as profound individualists they are understood never to spare themselves when working on their own. Everyone knows the breed. We call them *tukangs*, signifying "knights of the hammer."

You may think that because the *tukang* hails from the Celestial Kingdom, or thereabouts, his manners and morals might partake of a celestial nature, that his word would be as his bond, that if he tells you he is going to do something to-day it will get done to-day, and if to-morrow, then to-morrow. The condition of your house appears to call perhaps for certain repairs, very urgent repairs, needing to be put in hand immediately. Summoned from his near-by shack, the *tukang*

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surveys the damage, scratches his head with a foot-rule, nods gravely, and murmurs "*Besok*." You would think he has arrived at a nice apprehension of your requirements. To-morrow, *besok*, all will be well.

Besok, besok, by and by.

But *besok* never comes.

Bang goes your first illusion. The other is concerned less with morals than manners. You have read somewhere that *all* Chinese are born craftsmen, more artists indeed than artificers, and your imagination has played admiringly round the story of some devoted worker who spent thirty-three years fashioning a single golliwog for his grandson to play with, and when completed cast it into the fire because its countenance revealed a slight squint.

Is the Malayan Chinese *tukang's* heart in his art? It is not. *Jamais de la vie*. Unless you stand over him with a revolver, he will botch and bungle every single job his hand is turned to, and take a wicked pride in it.

I know of a house. Quite a nice house too, if gazed upon at a distance of not less than fifty yards, enjoying the advantage of an admirable and picturesque site, and revealing what the architects call a "pleasing elevation." But within, the æsthetic eye encounters some nasty jars. Undulating floors, concealing vast areas of what the army knows as "dead ground." Doors that will not shut, with apparently trick knobs that come off in your hand, puttyless windows that let in the rain and bang themselves merrily to bits to the music of every wind that blows, their ill-made joints never having been pinned together, their bolts and fastenings of base metal having parted company at the first breeze encountered. These last, renewed time after time with the same Brummagem rubbish, have

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deposited a ring of rusting odds and ends completely round the house. Upstairs, in the pleasant bath-room, the long bath glistens white and immaculate, but shocks are in store for the possibly fair occupant when the denizen of next door thinks of having a bath too, and curious subterranean rumblings and gurglings herald the sudden propulsion of the plug from its socket by alien hydraulic agency, and the irruption, in the form of a miniature geyser into one's own bath, of somebody else's bath-water.

Much more of wonder, as they say, might be provided by further indoor ramblings, but let us look without, through this casement tied back with string pending the replacement (*besok?*) of the usual attachment. See how after the shower the freshets run hither and thither in about fifteen different directions through this amusing switchback system of cement drains that lead nowhere, save at times of record high tide that serve to keep the morass in being at yon far corner of the compound.

Other anomalies exist for the seeking, but why bother about them? Let us pry no more. For this is the House that John built. The present occupant, they say, cherishes a pathetic affection for the place, and refuses to think about leaving it, though his slumbers are troubled nightly by visions of a supreme cataclysm, say in six months time, when the winds of a proper Malayan "Sumatra" may arise in the night, and bring the whole edifice crumbling about his ears. When it comes, the thing will be final. The Fall of the House of Usher will be nothing to what happens on that night of doom.

And as the rays of a hopeless dawn throw up the dust-heap contours of what was once the House that John built, our tenant in his dreams seems to perceive a shambling figure, its goblin frame swathed in amorphous raiment of blue dungaree, scrape and scrabble

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its way to the summit of this mound of desolation, peer blinkingly around, and with a foot-rule scratch, hesitatingly, its bristly yellow pate.

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Filthy Lucre

Not so very long ago the East used to be a place where various conditions combined to delude the new-comer into the belief that here, after all, might be Paradise, or something very like it. Not the least delightful feature of an urban existence in these parts was the fact that one seemed able to enjoy life without money, which so many of us had been taught in our childhood was the root of all evil. Most young men at Home had known what it was to be hard up. Living and working perhaps in London, part of their manhood's training had been to school themselves to the contemplation of luxuries which they very well knew were not for them. Through long habit, "going without" became too easy.

Here, however, it was different. It seemed not to matter whether one had money or not, so long as anybody at all knew who you were. You could dine like Lucullus in the best clubs and restaurants, hire a Rolls-Royce and take your fiancée for joy-rides, buy her, as it might be, a bunch of blue ribbons to tie up her bonny brown hair, a platinum and diamond-studded wrist-watch. In fact you could gratify every whim and caprice that might possess you, without the boring necessity of having to hand over a vulgar cash equivalent. There was only one little formality to be observed in regularising these transactions, you signed an unimportant-looking document called a "chit."

There came, of course, a day of reckoning, perhaps no later than the end of the month, when the chits

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came back, boomerang fashion, thick as leaves in Vallombrosa, and the world seemed a very dark and dreadful place. Just now in Malaya, however, except in the larger European shops and one or two of the clubs, the chit system seems to have fallen into desuetude.

That in itself is no bad thing, and the change has been fraught with happy consequences for many a careless spendthrift. But it has added a new minor terror to existence. We can no longer go about gaily pursuing our lawful occasions without a stiver in our pockets. Few transactions can be completed without cash. And what cash it is, this local currency of ours! It used to be rather nice to think of money in terms of notes, crisp rustling things that it was a pleasure to caress or feel the crinkle of in one's pocket. But who could in the old days have imagined such a thing as a ten-cent note issue?

It must be held that the proper receptacle for a man's small change is his trouser pocket. Glittering sovereigns used once (was it before the Flood?) to nestle there, jostled by shining half-crowns and florins and the harmless necessary pence which ensured our never having to go matchless or newspaperless in our walks abroad. Now, when we want to donate 10 cents to a rickshaw coolie or liquidate our liabilities in the club lounge, we plunge our hand into the self-same pocket to pluck forth a bundle of crumpled shreds and tatters, greasy, germ-infested, and altogether abominable, some of which fall on the floor and are lost, while the remainder need careful sorting, smoothing, and valeting before their various denominations can be distinguished. It might be argued that a sensible man would carry a case. Some do, but careless people object that they

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always lose them, particular ones that such things spoil the set of their silk suits.

A point that has often caused me wonder is how in the world an utterly illiterate and ignorant creature like a rickshaw coolie can tell one kind of note from another with such unerring facility when all, if not of the same size, are of the same depressing shade of dirt colour. He must be a very sharp fellow.

Is it not time that Malaya reverted to an honest silver currency in small change? Report says that there is heaps of silver available. It is stated furthermore that our Financial Adviser paid a special visit to Calcutta only very recently to see how they manage these things in India. If he gathered any useful tips we should be glad to learn what they were. If we really have to stick for the present to ten-cent notes, can Government not arrange free disinfecting facilities, as in other colonies? What most of them really want, of course, is the sort of treatment that Tutankhamen's bath-robe underwent lately at the careful hands of Mr. Carter, but failing that can we not ensure that the microbes be periodically slain? Cleanliness admittedly comes next to godliness, even in temperate climates. In the tropics the order might almost be reversed.

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High Days and Holidays

In Malaya, and particularly in the Federated Malay States, a superfluity of holidays seems really to be forced upon one. We are not quite as bad, perhaps, as the sort of people of whom Phædrus in his *Fables* said they were *occupata in otio*—"busily employed in idleness"—but to a stranger it must sometimes really look as if we were.

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IN A CHINESE TEMPLE

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There is, of course, a pretty good excuse. This is pre-eminently a country of mixed populations, creeds and races. Every race has its own catalogue of high days and holidays, upon which its nationals are enjoined by immemorial custom to do no manner of work whatsoever. And when the proportion of each race in a mixed labour force is appreciably large, it usually means that for one section to cease functioning means a complete stoppage of the machine. The consequence is, of course, that the labour force as a corporate body enjoys about five times as many holidays as would be the case if it were homogeneous in race and in religion. A typical Kuala Lumpur office establishment in the lower grades, for instance, comprises Indian Hindus, Indian Christians, Indian Mohammedans, Malays and Chinese. All sections insist on keeping their own fasts and festivals, and there is no section that is not indispensable for the proper performance of their combined task, in the case in point that of setting, printing and getting into circulation a daily newspaper. When one downs tools under permission that it would be folly to try to withhold, all the others follow suit, not unnaturally. Many business offices and most public offices, at least in this part of Malaya, are in a similar case. The official list ordains that sixteen public holidays should be observed in the Federated Malay States during the year. These include four rulers' birthdays, only one of which is observed in each state. There are the usual Christian festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide, the Moslem festivals of Hari Raia Pusa and Hari Raia Haji, national British anniversaries like the King's Birthday and Armistice Day, two days for Chinese New Year, and no allotments whatever to the big Hindu festivals, of which Teevali and Thai Pongal will certainly have to be observed by any industrial or

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business establishment employing Tamil labour. The list takes no cognisance of bank holidays pure and simple.

In the Colony they are more fortunate, if to be forced to celebrate fewer holidays is indeed to be so. Temporary cessations of work can hardly involve extra profits, and in fact operate contrariwise, while to put a steadily occupied labour force out of its stride must always demoralise it for a day or two following interruptions. *Multi tristantur post delicias, convivia, dies festos* —which is to say that we all know that post-holiday feeling.

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Pictures and Prestige

A disturbing topic is that of the cinema and its reaction upon the native mind. It is not that we take no precautions to ensure undesirable films being debarred from exhibition, for every film imported into the Peninsula has to be submitted for approval to the Film Censor in Singapore, a whole-time official with a serious sense of his responsibilities. In the Federated Malay States we employ a second check in the shape of a voluntary board of film censors, including at least one woman member, who may be required by the Commissioner of Police to confirm Singapore's favourable judgment on any film the local exhibition of which, for one reason or another, may be considered doubtful, while being specially invited to act individually in immediately reporting any questionable film coming under their own observation.

It will be seen then that with us the proprieties, to use the word in the widest possible sense, are fairly adequately safeguarded so far as the local exhibition of

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films is concerned. No more or less regular patron of "the pictures," however, can have failed to register from time to time a certain disquiet and uneasiness at the exhibition of subjects and scenes upon the screen which, though in no sense really noxious, are felt to be unsuitable for display to a largely unsophisticated audience that is bound to place a wrong interpretation upon them. The prestige of the European suffers in consequence, and must continue to do so in a steadily cumulative fashion until but few shreds of dignity remain to it. Some types of mind are too prone, perhaps, to insist upon the importance of this thing called "prestige." There are people who would like Europeans in the East to be esteemed above their merits by the indigenous population. That, of course, is morally indefensible, but it is equally wrong that they should be held up to the attention of the untutored Asiatic mind as something much inferior to a standard of conduct and character which they can legitimately claim.

The Eastern and similar markets must be so large and so remunerative that it would well repay the bigger film producers to evolve special services of pictures for exhibition in these parts whose whole production, from the scenario onwards, might be supervised by advisers competent to judge of their suitability. The bulk of the doubtful pictures at present in circulation throughout the East are said to be American. Diplomatic or other representations, made tactfully, might surely effect a quick improvement, failing which, of course, a more rigorous local censorship provides the only alternative.

So far as Malaya is concerned there is not a great deal to worry about. Most of its native communities are sufficiently intelligent, for instance, to appreciate the fact that a white man performing ridiculous antics is a deliberate clown.

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But the problem is quite a serious one, and increasingly so. The difficulty is as to how to deal with it. Somebody has suggested that films exhibited in countries of an alien civilisation should be entirely confined to the type of pictures produced for the use of schools. This is a little drastic. For one thing, in many cities a fairly large European resident population has to rely mainly upon "the pictures" for its evening entertainment, and their needs and requirements apart it seems a little rough on non-European patrons that they should be regaled with nothing more thrilling than "A Day in the Life of a Snowdrop."

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Rest-House Reflections

Every tropical colony appears to evolve its own type of rest-house, differing not overmuch in kind, but remarkably so in degree—of restfulness. Their function is natural and necessary. In the *pasangrahan* of Java, the *dak* bungalow of India, the plain "rest-house" of Equatorial Africa, Ceylon, and Malaya, there is little for the traveller to do but just rest, and be thankful. That is what these places are for. As civilisation progresses their amenities become correspondingly more elaborate, and there is a gamut of luxury which ascends from three mud walls and a roof of *attap* to cement floors, beds and baths that you have not brought with you, and tiffin *à la carte*. Comfort on this scale has been sublimated in Ceylon to a greater degree than elsewhere in my experience. But Malaya, fifty years behind, is steadily making up her leeway. She is, at least, streets ahead of Nigeria and Nyasaland, and a cut above Borneo.

I have suggested that the only obvious use of these

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habitations is for the wanderer to rest in, and then go on again. One arrives at nightfall, dines according to the resources of the place (usually on chicken or Malay curry and a couple of bananas), sleeps ditto ditto, breakfasts hurriedly (eggs, and two more bananas if you want them), and marches. There are people, though, hopeful enough to consider the rest-house in the light of an hotel. There are favourite spots where it is the vogue to spend a long week-end of sheer idleness, sometimes a week actually, and take the children. Such fashions have to be catered for, and the P.W.D. may rise to the occasion by superadding to the essential living-room furniture a decrepit bridge-table and a book-case, Government issue, Class IV. It often rains at week-ends in Malaya. But though that book-case may have a glass front, visitors are expected to bring their own books. Apparently, the only free literature available hangs upon the wall in the form of squares of cardboard advertising the nearest motor-car agency, or is pasted thereupon in peeling sheets on which tariffs and road regulations were once typed, but are now weathered into illegibility.

Yet there *is* free literature available, and often very entertaining literature too. The place for the Complaint Book is not the book-case, it being required by statute to be exhibited in a prominent position in the living-room. The head-boy prefers not to remember this rule. He secretes it in some inner sanctum, but you have only to call for it and produce it he must and will, if "with reluctance," *vide* remarks within by several contributors.

It was really a jolly week we had spent in the bungalow at X. Its design and garniture were beyond reproach, beds, tables and chairs in the simpler vein of Mr. Heal, gay chintzes reminiscent of the Peasant Shop in Blooms-

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bury. But of nights (and they were cold ones) our chimney's behaviour was like that of volcanoes in Java. Half-visible to each other in a darkness of the Pit, we gesticulated feebly, amid rolling billows of smoke. We coughed, we wept, and eventually ran out and hid in the garden. But morning and afternoon the sun shone, and life became a pleasant thing. "Routing out" prior to departure, one of us opened a cupboard and drew forth—a Complaint Book. Its exterior was glossy and undimmed, its interior absolutely blank and virgin. But this bungalow had been functioning for six months. Had we been the only unlucky ones? It could not be, for above the fire-place (after Mr. Adam and his brother) an unbroken band of carbon deposit spread from mantelpiece to ceiling, and invaded even that. Did we on this account sully the fresh purity of that premier page with any remark half so acrid as its subject? Not us.

Modesty usually does deter me from writing in such things as complaint books, no safeguards being provided against later derisive annotations by the vulgar, which might injure one's self-esteem if one came across them at some future date. But I delight in perusing the complaints of others, likewise the annotations. Lately, at the popular resort of Y., I occupied in this way a pleasant afternoon, its enjoyment in no wise lessened by the consciousness of a suspicious eye bent upon me from the darkness of the servants' quarters. Eventually, I had to grope for a scribbling-pad.

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I have mentioned the Complaint Book that no one ever had the heart to write in, despite a glaring and omnipresent cause for so doing. A certain moral courage was required to take this kind of plunge. Perhaps that

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is what always happens, and it needs a very consequential person to set the ball rolling, whereafter subsequent visitors tumble over each other like sheep in their anxiety to add each their own little quotum. This, assuredly, must have happened at Y., which started a book of this description away back in the early war years, of which everyone fought shy until somewhere about Armistice Day a certain Mr. M. got hold of the volume and covered two whole pages with his grievances, couched in rotund and stately periods, meticulously summarised under about a dozen heads. This kind of thing, indeed any signed contribution whatsoever, invites criticism from two quarters. One is the P.W.D. official responsible for upkeep and administration (we will call him A.), and the other B., the casual visitor, not unusually a flippant and even vulgar person, who comes along afterwards. B.'s note in this case is not surprising: "Of course Mr. M. would be the first to write in this book. His literary effort may have merit, but most people have no time to waste in reading it."

Nothing dashed, we find M. at it again in a few weeks. He resents the fact that the head-boy seems to have hidden the book, and does not exactly jump to the order when dispatched for it. It is A. who chimes in this time. All right then, let the book stop on the table. The object of locking it up was "to keep *idiots* from writing *rubbish* in it." But this official petulance evaporates—in three years—when another grouse from M. only draws the rejoinder: "Quite like old times to have Mr. M. again in the book." All the same, A. does seem a little crotchety. One contributor (possibly a missionary) regrets the fact that "there are never enough limes for a lime squash." "Hardly a subject for the complaint book," snorts A., who clearly does

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not favour this beverage. Not that teetotalers, though, are the only complainants who fall under the lash of his scorn. To one who urges that "wire round tennis court should be repaired—lost four balls this afternoon," the acknowledgment is "rather wild play!" To a plea for "some decent bath-towels?" comes back the withering retort that "only *normal* people are catered for at the rest-house. There are two varieties already." Others demanding such seemingly reasonable amenities as "eye-proof bathroom doors" and occasional relief from "weird and unknown brands of butter and tea" are sharply reminded that "this is not the Hotel Cecil," despite the fact that a page or two farther it is officially claimed that "Y. is probably the most popular rest-house in the Peninsula."

To his credit, it may be said that A. adopts a gentler method with the ladies. An exposition of the best procedure to adopt in hanging mosquito curtains, in true *Home Notes* vein, draws forth the polite, if cold rejoinder: "the lecture appreciated." To an almost tearful complaint under the same head—"the *nice* mosquito curtains are *quite* useless because improperly hung"—he has not the heart to retort in words.

But enough of A., who doubtless suffers from a host of minor worries, quite apart from rest-houses, affecting his after-breakfast temper in our notoriously trying climate. And he often contents himself with a "noted," after all. Trials in tact not infrequently confront him. What, for instance, should he do about the following?

One Mr. Capt. ——, Royal Horse Marines (*Horse* apparently the interpolation of a later B.), what his bags give the name removed my barangs and put outside from room occupied by me during my absence on Govt. duty. If this Govt. R. H. I as G. S. drawing over $100 per mensim am entitled for the same.

C. R.
Insp. Peles.

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Not a few grumbles will arouse general sympathy. The growth of "a new patch of rubber behind the Chinese shop" is deplored. "With all due deference to rubber, we do like to get away from it sometimes. Why not forest trees?" Again, "If every visitor removed one rose-bush, how long would the garden last?" "Should one go through a spring mattress, is he liable for breakages?" "Matter would need careful consideration" is A.'s cautious reply. But, "sorry, have fallen through floor of Room No. 4," brings, "what a pity you did not stay there!" (the old Adam again). Somebody suggests "a large and comfortable settee" for the big room. "For two?" queries a facetious later arrival, probably the author of the "how did you know?" addendum to a poetic effort beginning:

> Found black ayah in bed,
> Large, dark, heavy as lead.

Odd, too, that there should always be found visitors of a Pharisaical turn who deprecate everybody else's complaints with more or less unction. Somebody even suggests that the charges should be *raised*, in view of the "distance from town" (this writer is referred to official note *re* "idiots").

Poetic effusions are scrappy, but the best is in the right Barham tradition, and evinces that philosophic spirit which it would become every traveller to adopt:

> On going away I should just like to say
> The attendance was good and so was the food.
> However, at nights, we were covered with bites
> From our heads to our knees—it may have been ——
> Or (it's not very nice) perhaps it was ——
> So I'd humbly submit that when slump will permit
> They (whatever their names) be consigned to the flames
> And on our future meetings, we shall always bring ——.
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> . . . . . .

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PORT DICKSON.

If you go to Port Dickson, you cannot bathe all the time. Actually, it is silly to bathe at all unless you own rights in a *pagar*, which is an enclosure of palisades that at high tide will give you a decent swimming depth, but which you can enter dryshod at low water. The great point is that it should be strong enough to keep out both crocodiles and sharks. Probably you will never see either, but they may be there all the same. A year or two back a shark took one poor girl two seconds after she had dived from the spring-board at the Singapore Swimming Club, within a mile of which no shark had been seen for years. Nor did anybody plainly see that one.

Stranger was the Tjokjakarta horror. I remember the story coming through to Singapore, how here a party of young people, Dutch and English (the place is on the southern shore of Java), were bathing in a sea hardly more than waist deep when one of the English youths suddenly shrieked. It was not cramp, for he was seen to be standing up, the water below his armpits. One friend reached him in a few seconds, seized an outstretched arm, and pulled. Another man—a woman—seized the other hand, and all tugged, tugged. Then the tide all about them crimsoned. They pulled and pulled, and the strain suddenly eased. It was ghastly when they turned to see what burden they had dragged, stumblingly, ashore.

No one saw anything. Somebody "thought they felt a kind of tentacle."

It may have been a giant octopus. There is quite an ancient legend that tells how a Javanese princess (Tjokjakarta is a sultanate still), bathing at exactly this spot among her handmaidens, was clutched and drawn under by some Grendel of the reef.

There are certainly octopods of almost incredible

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dimensions in these waters, perhaps as big as krakens. Larger than any shark, swordfish weighing many tons have their hunting-ground here in the deeps, where also lurk sting-rays bigger than full-sized billiard-tables.

So at Port Dickson, or anywhere else along these coasts, sensible people bathe inside *pagars*. Even these will not keep out the jelly-fish (on their at-home days), or the luckily not very common *ikan sembilan*, a little abomination not unlike our English weever, who buries all of himself in sand or mud save his nine poisoned spines. Malay fishermen and others who have trodden on him have died of their wounds, as of the bites of sea-snakes. It was quite a mild sort of sea-snake whose venom, analysed, proved just seventy times as strong as a cobra's.

But, inside *pagars*, sensible people will still bathe. It would be feeble not to when Providence arranges a week-end for you at any of the delectable bungalows which peep out every furlong or so from the casuarinas and the coconuts that fringe, only thirty yards from the surf's edge, Port Dickson's eight-mile crescent of silver strand. That, and lying under the casuarinas—whose globular, rough seeds will harry the more plastic areas of your anatomy till you call out for long chairs, which you probably will not get, your staff being at the siesta likewise under the bungalow (where the sand is smooth) or playing mah-jongg in some obscure hovel under pretence of buying groceries—that, I say, and lying under the casuarinas, were the only things to do in Port Dickson until one or two of us lately invented a new game.

We instituted, with appropriate rites, the Worshipful Company of Port Dickson Fan-makers.

The craft and mystery of Port Dickson Fan-making is conducted more or less as follows.

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You lie prone on your chest upon the seashore.

By passes made with the palm of your hand you render smooth a fan-shaped area of that shore—as big or little as you please—a yard span is rather an out-size.

You then decorate it. The rule is that you must not get up to fetch anything. Literally within arm's length Nature has provided for your purpose shells of a hundred shapes, sizes, and colours, sprigs and sprays of seaweed robust or fragile, in hues ranging from a generous liquorice to palest amber, coral, and jade. There are also casuarina seeds (the only use they have), various small and perhaps fantastic objects of flotsam and jetsam.

If you have not produced a work of art in half an hour the rule is that you go and wake up the boy, or fetch the drinks yourself.

Any mortal hand or eye, almost, ought to be able to frame a symmetry of decoration for the space at disposal on whose account any artist-poet might reasonably enthuse. With patience and a modicum of skill, arabesques may be woven that suggest rare Peking embroideries, bright flowers in the diapered border of some monkish missal.

Perhaps, though, the other game, where you can go and fetch things from the bungalow, really gives originality more scope.

Say your fan is Japanese, that you have traced, with a trickle of darker sand grubbed up well within your stretch, the familiar contours of Fujiyama, touched in with seaweed floss the lake at Fuji's foot, stippled its surface with little Jap fishing-boats—just a twig, and a triangle of broken mussel-shell for the sail—even that sail's reflection—tinier scraps turned over for their glistening nacre to imprison the gleam of a high light.

You still need a snow-cap for Fuji.

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Run up the bungalow steps and bring the Eno's bottle. Two teaspoonfuls will be enough.

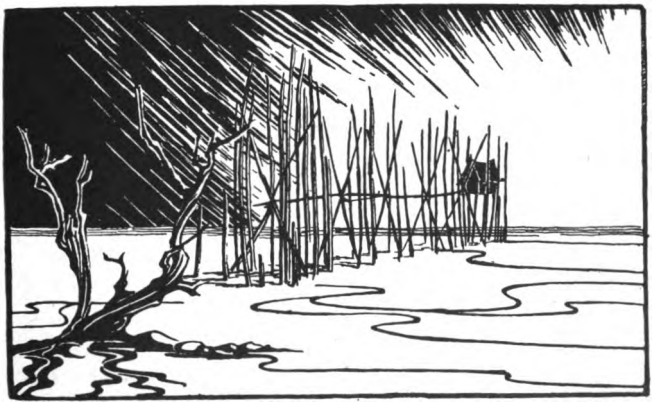
With copper cents and three puffs of cotton-wool you can do the Flying Scotsman in one minute.

Portraits of local celebrities in the same way.

For that splendid old fellow the Malay ruler of Negri Sembilan, you will want a lot of cotton-wool, because

> In Negri Sembilan
> Yam di per Tuan Besar
> Wears his mustachios
> Like bicycle handlebar,

which goes very well to *La Donna è Mobile*. This dignified and popular potentate's moustache is indeed a landmark in his own state and beyond, yet you only have to turn up the first half-dozen portraits in old official records to see that our own colonial administrators of fifty years ago all favoured the "bicycle handlebar" fashion. I am positive the present cadet generation lacks the necessary virility to produce anything half so magnificent.



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PART II

INSULINDE

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INSULINDE

s.s. *Bontekoe*,
In the MAKASSER STRAITS.

How very Dutch! I thought, as I scanned the four-square, solid outline of this extraordinarily businesslike-looking ship.

A stout and seaworthy box is our hull, commodious enough to accommodate all the various cargo of this island trade: live pigs and dried pepper, dwarf cattle and desiccated copra, baulks of ebony and sacks of spice. Our oddly cross-treed masts are merely auxiliary derricks; our funnel, plumb upright, suggests Puffing Billy or a Mississippi show-boat.

It was in Singapore Roads that these comparisons first occurred to me. But that was ages ago, a fortnight that seems a year, and all the width of the Java Sea stretches between Blakang Mati and our present location,

By the Little Paternosters, as you come to the Union Bank,

bearings and soundings remembered since one first read the *Mary Gloster* duly confirmed by the ship's chart, likewise the exact kind of sea stereoscoped by Kipling in four words.

Not the sort of tropic sea one hopes to come upon later. Here no pellucid depths, submarine wonders, fairylands of coral, shell-encrusted wrecks, rainbow fishes. Just a vitreous floor for the firmament, of an ugly opaque green, with the barest rise and fall to it. No solitary sea-bird riding the swell for miles,

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not a fin cutting the glassy film. Only an untidy shred of ship's flotsam streaking furtively past the counter.

Yet for a week every dawn save one has brought us a new landfall. Cast us adrift in a row-boat and we could hardly feel lost, for to port or starboard, forward or astern, land of some sort would assuredly loom. No mere palm-feathered atoll of sand or coral either. Switzerland, when Noah's flood had only half subsided, might have looked a little like this. Hardly an island but is really by rights a mountain, and even where an easy gradient seems to decline from the sheer cutaway of some slumbering volcano to the sea, you have only to steam close inshore to mark how the beach falls away like the side of a house, so that the urchins who haunt all beaches save those of absolutely uninhabited islands are seen to stagger rather than scamper along its margin as they hail your advent.

It was from just this spot that the *Mary Gloster's* desperate skipper started on a "spree round Java" that nearly proved his undoing. It is my lot to emerge from a similar adventure, and one that had the chances of a similar contingency tacked on to it. I shall always do what I can for Java by way of testifying to its manifold attractions if my opinion should ever be asked, but never will I forget that Java nearly did for me. If you go railway travelling there, you take your life in your hand. Having to change trains, you do so not via bridges attached by numbered staircases to numbered platforms, but by scrambling over or under various other trains parked seemingly at random about the place. Occasionally such trains start off on their own while your adventure is still in progress, with more or less attendant physical damage to yourself. Some travellers thereupon lose their lives or their limbs.

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Those marked for more sinister ends by Providence are merely blooded, as was I.

As a matter of fact, I ought not to suggest that this particular train gave one of those standing jumps that stationary trains very often do give, even in hall-marked British colonies, because it remained perfectly quiet. Coming as I do from the British part of Malaya I had lately, as a matter of public and patriotic duty, bought myself a pair of crêpe-soled shoes. Personally I have always secretly detested all species of footwear that have the faintest smell or suggestion of rubber about any part of their composition, and now I know that my loathing was instinctive and sound. Sooner or later, you slip up on the darn things. In gaining that assurance I have learned incidentally what the inside of a Dutch hospital looks like, and how a Dutch surgeon takes any Anglo-Saxon visitor for an American millionaire. Both are patterns of efficiency, but you cannot call either cheap.

I feel, though, I owe that Dutchman a testimonial. He had taken one look at my leg, whisked me into the theatre, jabbed me to the bone with a stiletto that turned out to be a syringe, whipped in half a dozen stitches, and sent me to bed, in about two shakes of a duck's tail. Or not exactly, for how can I forget the history that enthralled my ear in the course of these undertakings, that of his colleague who was half-way through a major operation urgently undertaken in the middle of the night when the electric current failed, all the lights went out, those who ran for lamps or candles never came back, while on till nearly day-break the surgeon hung with his thumbs pressed to arteries whose pulse grew fainter and fainter, warm flesh slowly chilled, and life ebbed away under his powerless hands.

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I agreed that it was a nasty experience, and perhaps no fault of anybody's.

"Couldn't happen here now," he assured me. "My fee? Oh, well, fifty guilders apart from the hospital's" (which for twelve hours' bed, board and attendance was to prove over a hundred). "But I shall be perfectly happy if you deal with it by mail at the end of your travels. It's a bore to cart bank-notes about when you are voyaging; I never do myself. All I'm worrying about is whether you'll find somebody to take my stitches out."

Actually, I found nobody. It is the main drawback of ocean travel in these seas that the smaller passenger boats carry no doctors.

. . . . . .

Such trifling accidents apart, however, it is hard to disapprove of Java. You can only hold it a minor annoyance that its imagined ports mostly prove to be miles away from the spot where your steamer actually ejects you, and that the odd ten kilometres or so of taxi-ride runs away with the guilders if frequently repeated. Singapore and Colombo, where the perpetual wonder of what the wild waves may happen to be saying acts as a soporific, nightly and *da capo*, even in the best hotel bedrooms, have, I suppose, spoiled me a little.

Besides, the Dutch have a habit of constructing a perfectly good port and then deciding that they don't want to live in it. They took enormous pains to make of Batavia a piece of authentic Holland, camouflaging its river to look like canals, adding dozens of apparently unnecessary real canals of their own; enlivening the said canals with flotillas of frivolous-looking barges and

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droves of demure-looking ducks; running up a picturesque toy town of shops and houses neat as so many new pins, and already mellowed to a respectable antiquity of three centuries; piling up suggestions of local colour that leave you in momentary expectation of finding a stage Dutchman in pipe and baggy trousers leaning over the next bridge and crooning a chorus out of *Miss Hook of Holland*; and then decided that the net result, in the tropics, was no sort of sensible place to live in, and set to again to plan, on a healthier site some three miles away, the delightful garden city of Weltevreden.

Not that Weltevreden in its turn could be anything but Dutch. Never a dwelling but has the authentic Dutch polish, inside and out, the so un-English air of inviting the passer-by to admire an interior spick and span beyond the possibility of criticism. The burgher taking his ease with his family upon the stoep rather likes you to watch him doing it, and if all the blue china, Delft tiles, and waxed woodwork in the place were not on semi-public exhibition it might be thought that the good *vrouw* were ashamed lest it should fail to pass muster. Here, too, canals seem to border every roadway. Thus one goes to Weltevreden from Batavia by Molenvliet, which is to say the "road of the mill stream," whose shady length stretches alongside. The homely sentiment of the Dutch seems to crop up everywhere in their place-names. Molenvliet itself suggests nothing of the tropics. Weltevreden means no more than "well content"; Buitenzorg, the delightful up-country station where the Governor spends most of his time *in villegiatura*, signifies "care free" simply. South African topography affords many parallels.

Here the same Dutch types abound in the streets as at the Cape, but naturally more in evidence, the same

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lusty children with shining morning faces riding the same bicycles, most of the girls of a pearly fairness with luxuriant manes and pig-tails of flax, boys with sock-suspenders braced on the outside of fat, bare legs, and odd Kate Greenaway caps. Flappers and young matrons alike take the air on bicycles, and mostly without hats, at any hour of the day. Nobody seems to be afraid of sunstroke, alleged to be practically unknown. Certainly a *topi* is a rarity among the men, and straw hats much in favour, but then many of these families are of the fourth colonial generation, and perhaps sun-proof.

Undoubtedly a large percentage of children of pure European parentage never do go "Home," and appear not to suffer. Physically the Dutch type maintains itself steadily under the local climatic conditions, which, owing to its diversities of altitude, humidity, and so forth, make of Java a far healthier place for Europeans than the Malay Peninsula, for all that it clings throughout its whole length so close to the Equator.

Nor does the Eurasian element here, numerous enough but not so socially ubiquitous as some observers would have us believe, betray the physical weakness that marks so many of the hybrid stocks farther west. It may be merely a biological accident that derives from the fusion of Dutch and Javanese Malay a stocky and robust breed, of excellent physical fitness and quite creditable moral calibre. The Dutch Eurasian holds his head up and takes a proper pride in himself and his belongings. It is a mistake, however, or so I am assured by Dutch residents of standing, to assume that a "touch of colour" is not considered socially detrimental, far less that miscegenation is even tacitly encouraged from any notion that it may attach the colonist more firmly to his adopted home.

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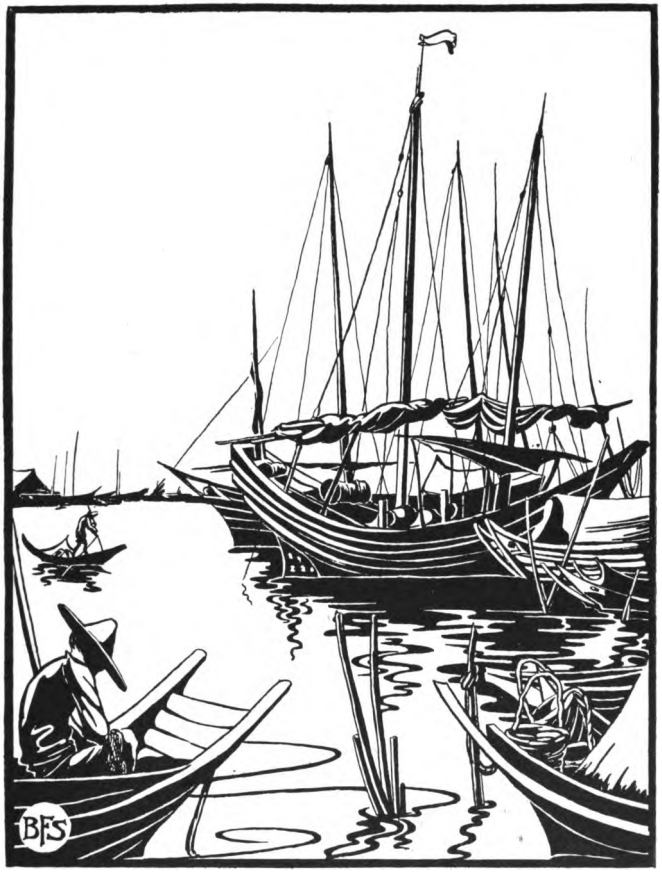

JUNKS AT TANDJONG PRIOK

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Americans are great critics of their neighbours. But then they visit them with such assiduity that I suppose they imagine they have a right to be. Here one cannot escape these inveterate globe-compassers, or anyway their traces, the ashes of their camp-fires still smouldering on every trail. They have bumped up the prices of everything, from hotels and "autos" to curios and Pears' Soap. Their blatant newspapers and bloated magazines lie about in every reading-room, the sole alternative to the sober-seeming but, alas, unintelligible *Handels-Blads* and *Courants*.

I pick one up. A world-famous weekly, in its way a triumph of journalistic achievement, the "matter" obviously a blend of extreme care which shall leave no respectable American palate unsatisfied—short stories abounding in "snap" and "pep," mostly revealing picturesque American methods of money-making or strangely characteristic American diversions, e.g. the community auto-picnic. The dark ages of 1900 B.F. are referred to—Before Ford.

There is just one "travelogue," a very long chain of peppy pars about places and people outside America, all of which the writer appears to be familiar with and none of which he seems to think really highly of. No Englishman can see a joke. Such as do get into print in British newspapers are "not the type of quip that would go big on the American vaudeville stage." It is flatly asserted that no English house containing a dozen or more bedrooms has more than one bath-room, if that. But there is an attempt to catch up with English "culture," evidenced by the employment of forgotten British writers and dramatists of the dear dead nineteen hundreds to write their personal and highly patronising reminiscences of Shaw, Barrie, and such transatlantic friends of culture as Charles Frohmann. The same

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pathos attends the avidity with which "high-brow" America absorbs the platitudes delivered by second-rate British novelists, whose lecturing triumphs have absolved them from the need of any further interest in publishers' royalties. But I am getting away from the *Saturday Evening Post*, which in many respects still commands my admiration. For one, its price, 5 cents for about a week's reading. The élan of its advertisements, the mechanical perfection of their pictorial side, cord tyres and silk-clad legs actually more life-like than the real thing. But some of them make me critical.

THE ROLL OF HONOR

turns out to be the Player Music Roll, which is a bit of a jar. Others, though, are great fun:

CLARK GRAVE VAULT

When the loved one passes, the heart recognises obligations that may never have been spoken or thought. The most important of these is that the remains be protected.

LESS THAN CLARK COMPLETE PROTECTION IS NO PROTECTION AT ALL.

Also to be noted is:

GUSH! GURGLE! SQUISH!

And company in the next room——!
That constant trickle so obviously from ——!
How embarrassing!

MUSHROOM PARABAL

It can't help but fit every time!

I will say nothing about the profusion of appeals to the man-hunting urge instinct in the young female

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breast of to-day, because most English magazines equally abound in them. Home reading had taught me all there is to know about the virtues of Beet Cream and even more intimate toilet mysteries, but their real office is here more brazenly exhibited, as instance, right across the double page:

WOULD YOU BE HIS CHOICE FOR THE DANCE?

the A, I fancy, short, as in "pants."

The odd thing is, though, that quite a lot of Americans perceive the humour implicit in these things just as well as any outsider. Sinclair Lewis and the other heavier-handed satirists aside, for artful but unmalicious ragging of one's own national foibles, *Life* and *Judge* can give points to *Punch* any time. Spoof advertisements and their captions provide a very happy medium for this:

"THE FIFTH ONE'S GOT PYORRHEA!"

And there was a very good one about Miss Kelly from Springfield (KELLYS DON'T SKID), but too recondite for this commentary.

. . . . . .

Perhaps it would be jollier to talk about some really charming Americans. Indecently rich, as one could not help gathering, but not probably considered or considering themselves ultra-fashionable people. Rather the now slightly old-fashioned Henry James type. Anyway the aunt (which presupposes a niece) came from Boston.

They came aboard at Singapore, last-minute arrivals transhipped in harbour from a Ceylon boat, doing the round Chicago - China - Peru - Chicago trip in seven months, complete with suite of two male couriers (plain and coloured—the latter as adviser on Oriental

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lore and usages) and maid (plain and pleasant). Presumably the usual thing, cabling from Colombo to charter a yacht from Singapore to Batavia, if they missed the connection and threw a wondrous time-table out of gear, guessing that in default the captain would accept $3000 (gold) to keep the ship back twenty-four hours.

But it was not so at all. They were really the sweetest people, simple, kind, intelligent, guileless. Promiscuously communicative, the aunt (a grandmother of seven) turning birdlike from a complete acceptance of the captain's fable about its being Chinese goldfish that was smothered with tartare sauce to assure her right-hand neighbour that it was safer not to drink this foreign water, and those cases of Evian in the hold ought to last till Hong-Kong and she guessed Monica oughtn't eat that cute little gherkin, and then to tell me about her vurry great friendship with, of all people, Oliver Wendell Holmes. Actually, she seemed to have known the old man as well as half a century's difference in ages could allow, and J. G. Whittier too, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Lowell, and all the post-Emerson coterie, and proud she was of her rearing in such an atmosphere.

Of Oliver Wendell Holmes she had a good story, herself having been able to tell him about Browning's contradicting them all at a Boston tea-party when Gray's *Elegy* was voted the best short poem yet. Robert Browning would not have it so. *The Chambered Nautilus* deserved to stand the winner, for did it not assemble all the requisites of an epic within the dimensions of a lyric, and was not every word in it the unalterable *mot juste*? Whether Browning carried the party with him I do not know, but old Holmes was hugely delighted with the story, incidentally confessing to his little friend

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that there was just one line in the *Nautilus* that still failed absolutely to satisfy him. He had never truly approved of *its shining*, but had sought vainly throughout years for any substitute.

Monica, too, revealed a personality. Of the dark-eyed, raven-haired, incredibly slender type, she was always abominably late for breakfast. But if you stayed on to talk you discovered she had a mind like a knife. It seemed that at home it amused her to live like a boy scout, she having, on leaving school, acquired in the real estate market some two score acres of wilderness in Washington State, whereon she erected a log cabin, shingled (I think) from her own timber at a hundred times the cost of the standardised imported article, and abode therein, breeched and self-sufficing, living on the produce of her own gun, rod, and garden plot, and doing all her own "chores," during many months of each year.

She liked Robert Frost's poetry and men's bridge.

But she bowed to all Auntie's prejudices, even that against cigarettes for young girls.

I am not sure that Monica ought not to be canonised.

"Auntie's travelling precautions, my, you can't beat them!" was almost her last confidence to me. "She believes most everything she's warned about. You got her about that aerated water stock. But another friend she opined silk, *cêrpe de Chine*, cambric, most *anything*, was a peril to sleep in anywhere'n the Orient. So all mine are flannel. Specially made, of course. And I simply *ca-an't* sleep till about daybreak every mortal night. Guess you kind of wondered why I was always late for breakfast."

Both the couriers, and the plain and pleasant maid, and Auntie, bird-like and busy as ever, all veiled, portentously helmeted and horn-spectacled, all flourish-

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ing attaché cases and little ginger-coloured copies of *Come to Java*, came and whisked Monica away, down the gangway and over the wharf and through the big black door of the Douane out of sight for ever, for there was the Museum and the cannon, and Heaven-above-knows-what-all to see before the Buitenzorg train went at 4.30.

It seemed only decent to conjure up a certain sympathy, though Monica's hurried confidence was disconcerting, and as to what *they* were—— ("Nighties, dear," I have been since advised, "but *flannel*—my goodness gracious!")

. . . . . .

A hundred keels of the K.P.M. furrow the glassy seas of Insulinde, and a very ship-shape fleet they are too, taut and trim to outward seeming and within all clean and glistening, not a rope's-end out of place nor a brass knob unpolished, and (on all that carry passengers) a strict little table of rules in every cabin. Theoretically you must smoke nowhere save on deck, though most people break this rule all day long and escape being put in irons. But the warning against cherishing war-like animals or ripening bananas in your cabin means what it says.

. . . . . .

One or two things intending travellers would be wise to note. Free soap, either in cabin wash-basins, ship's bathrooms, or hotel bedrooms, is a thing unknown in the Dutch East Indies. Bring your own and plenty of it. Further minor precautions likely to minister to physical comfort will suggest themselves, there being other

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matters in which our national customs are at variance. Likewise, you won't get an English bath till you land again in an English colony, but you can have as many Dutch ones as you please, and only up-to-date plumbing can give you very much more in British Malaya. Having bolted yourself into the *badkamer*, do not call loudly upon the *Jonges* to hurry up with the forgotten bath-water, but make straight for the plain deal cupboard in the corner, lift the square lid in its top, whose handle you will now perceive, and behold your bath-water encisterned. A small brass dipper, polished till it shines again, is somewhere about, and the rest experience should already have taught you. Leaving, a thoughtful little notice strikes your eye above the door-knob, a line of Dutch, of German, of French, and lastly:

HAVE YOU LEFT NOTHING BEHIND?

and you stretch thankfully for a precious slab of Pears'.

. . . . . .

Colonial Dutch always like to pretend that they are still in Holland. Outside and in, they make their houses look as if they belonged to a garden city within hail of Amsterdam, and only the tropic vegetation serves to upset that illusion. As I said before, they seem to detest what we should call reasonable privacy, and English travellers in consequence often find themselves intruding where they have no right to be. Here the sense that at Home, when you are trespassing, reminds you infallibly of that fact, somehow deserts you, leaving you hopelessly at sea.

There is an old, old gentleman, rich they say and admittedly a little eccentric, whose hobby is the col-

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lection of colonial antiques, and who chooses not to live in a bungalow, but in an hotel in the heart of one of Java's biggest cities. From the stoep of his apartment one steps straight into the public highway, and it is actually on the stoep that a museum-load of statuary, bureaux, chests, almeirahs, bibelots and whatnots are, I should not say arranged, but piled higgledy-piggledy, under drifting dunes of dust.

Wandering thereabouts, I judged myself to have hit upon either a marine store, junk-shop, or auctioneer's dump, and, my eye caught by certain dirt-encrusted pieces of Chinese porcelain, advanced a hesitating but as I judged permitted foot to investigate. There was a jolly blue jar that looked as if it might be mine for ten guilders. But there came a roar from somewhere in that dark interior, and I blushed hotly and fell back.

Of course I apologised—to the only bad-tempered Dutchman I've ever met.

The leading surgeon of the place is similarly housed and, when I told him the tale of my discomfiture, confessed that Americans and Englishmen were always striding into what was really his own consulting-room, and when the peon proffered the usual "name and business" chit, complete with pencil, inscribing thereon "One large whisky and soda," with the enjoinder to hurry up about it.

What seems to us an odd conservatism is odder still in its other outstanding manifestation, the colonial Dutch menu. If there is one thing you can feel sure about it is that your food, on ship-board, in hotels, rest-houses or private bungalows, will be both clean and wholesome. But its nature is matter, so near the Equator as we are, for perpetual wonder. Favourite and ever-recurring dishes are of a solidity, of a magni-

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tude too as regards the local idea of a "helping" for one, to stagger any Britisher at his most ravenous.

Back in Holland the populace, to hold native damps and chills at bay, have accustomed themselves, as we assume, to "eat hearty" for motives of sheer expediency. Not to do so would be to court perhaps galloping consumption and an early grave, wherefore they eat, drink (the juniper berry hath its victories too against the truant bacillus of *micrococcus catarrhalis*), and in their own way are presumably merry. What astonishes is that under equatorial suns they make no effort to modify a habit that has become second nature.

And yet they thrive.

I suppose the national dish *par excellence* is *Rijstaffel*, though various other compounds of a like solid and ultra-nutritive character must run it close. Of these more anon, the while I throw some light on the amazingly complex character of Insulinde's substitute for a curry tiffin.

Rijstaffel is more than a dish, than a collation, even than a meal; it is an adventure, an undertaking, an occupation, almost a vocation.

Like any harmless curry, it begins with rice. But having begun to shovel this upon the largest soup-plate you have ever seen, you must not stop till gravity moulds for you a perfect pyramid.

Then you really do begin.

Curry first. Two ladles full, plus all usual concomitants.

Fried steak. Say four inches by three. Fillet perhaps, an inch thick anyway.

Fried fish. Ditto, ditto.

A leg of broiled chicken.

A wing ditto.

Now some extra vegetables.

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Gobbets of something skewered cat's-meat fashion, but quite edible.

Some desiccated tripe (Bombay duck, says one, but who knows?).

Curried eggs.

Flapjacks white and pink.

Anything else you fancy, and

Why not a couple of sausages?

The whole really wants very careful revetting at this point, nevertheless a little vigorous stirring is now the mode. It is supposed to impart an at least superficial homogeneity to the mass, and new acquaintances among the ingredients get, so to speak, friendly.

. . . . . .

Everything ready, sergeant-major?

Everything ready, sir.

Then over the top we go, and the best of luck!

. . . . . .

Then there is *Hoetspot*, with an edifying little romance attached to it. I sailed in one ship whose rule was that Sunday was *Rijstaffel* day and Thursdays were earmarked for *Hoetspot*. I subscribed to this with pleasure after a week or two in Java, where at many hotels every day is *Rijstaffel* day unless a written request is handed in at the office before 10 a.m. beseeching the cook to substitute something else.

Hoetspot is really very simple fare, if stodgy, just pease pudding fortified with cubes of beef and an occasional broad bean or so. Though the Dutch have made it their own, even to the extent of appointing a special day of the week for its consumption and giving it a red line to itself in the calendar, it was actually in the beginning a Spanish delicacy.

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Two hundred years and more ago, when the Netherlands were overrun by Philip's legions, the burghers of Leyden found themselves sore beset. Closely beleaguered for months, the city's commissariat was running more than short, and in the poulterers' shops well-grown rats were as dear as partridges out of season. When things seemed at their worst, there came a morning (it was the 3rd of October) when a starveling sentry peeped over the battlements, and rubbed his eyes in astonishment at what he saw, or did not see. Gone was the serried array of Spanish tents, silent and empty the horse-lines where Spanish barbs and Flanders geldings had yesterday screamed and kicked in concert, no bark of culverin or musket or twang of arquebus signalled the customary "morning hate," and not a lurking halberdier or pikeman remained discernible above ground this side of the horizon. Hastily summoned, the city fathers deprecated any form of premature rejoicing. The crafty Don had arranged some devilish ruse, the affair must be a trap, but exactly what fashion of a trap, who could tell? Let some bright youngster, say little Conrad here, be sent forth to reconnoitre. Should the trap be set, even the dogs of Papists would not harm a child, little Conrad's appetite is not small, and if the worst befall he can still serve his country.

Conrad, very proud and important, sallied forth. Hours passed, and he did not return.

. . . . . .

If we had been able to accompany him, scrambling, poking, and peering into empty trenches and round abandoned fosses, traversing the Spanish camp from outpost line to supports and finding nothing at all, we should have felt with him that the enemy indeed were "goners," and it behoved us with all speed to carry

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back the glad tidings. But one must be thorough about a job of this sort.

And left "nothing," we said. Ha! This only shows.

See here, beside these yet smouldering ashes, this cauldron as big as any coal-scuttle, a pleasant subdued bubbling still agitating its lid. A whole platoon's rations perhaps. Let us lift the lid.

Now George Washington, who blabbed about his silly little axe, would probably have shouldered the whole contraption and staggered home with it to his hungry family. Conrad—a real he-man in embryo—did nothing so soppy.

. . . . . .

A late afternoon sun was drawing long shadows over the grass when they found him. There was still some *Hoetspot* left, almost half a cauldron of it.

The Dutch are not a vindictive people, and they honour all their pioneers. So Conrad and *Hoetspot* both became historic.

. . . . . .

Ewrtensoep is another of these super-satisfying concoctions. You can guess from its name that it is not altogether solid, and so far as you eat it with a spoon that diagnosis is correct, though if the spoon fails on trial to stand upright of its own volition in the midst of it the cook earns a severe reprimand, if not the sack. Green peas, and yellow peas, barley, potatoes, onions, beans long and green and beans broad and brown, are all parts of the whole, which I do assert is good.

At lunch you will get no cheese, with or without biscuits. But at breakfast it is always there, the round flattened cheese of Holland, neatly quartered, with a little silver button clipped to each side of it for your

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thumb and forefinger. You pare it into shavings to make sandwiches of, with liver sausages and what I think must be blood puddings. Tea, somehow, is never just right, though they grow a good *jat* of it on certain Java estates. Coffee is excellent in its fashion, if seldom hot enough. It arrives thick and syrupy, but never more than two fingers deep, in the bottom of your cup. The coffee-pot is not seen at table, only the milk-jug, of which you make copious use or otherwise as you wish.

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Museums in most places see very little of me, if not enshrining some particular attraction that I am convinced I want to inspect. But the Weltevreden Museum is no ordinary raree show, and holds so much of wonder that Batavian lovers never make assignations there, knowing well that the surroundings would be too distracting.

It has a treasure-room like Aladdin's cave, archæological galleries that beat certain sections of the British Museum hollow, and ethnographical collections of a range and completeness that inspire reverence. Attended by a courteous and most patient cicerone, who willingly cast office papers aside to enlighten my ignorance in broken English eked out with Malay, I spent here a me orable afternoon.

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We started on the treasure-chamber because that

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happened to come first. All its walls and cabinets seem to throw back the soft gleam of gold, burnished and ancient, with here and there the mild twinkle of some old cabochon-cut gem.

Gorgeous gold *krises* of long-dead island sultans, dancers' head-dresses of filigree crowned with trembling sprays of rubies, old rings, torques, and chains of office, pendants and ouches of diamond, emerald and turquoise, charms and pagods graven by old craftsmen who were artists, and, for comparison, modern work and dealers' fakes produced by craftsmen who emphatically were not. Along the wall some curiosities, a row of ancient and corroded Chinese gongs in bronze. On islands thousands of miles apart these things have been dug up, mute witness to the ubiquity of Chinese colonisation in the Archipelago as far back as Tudor days, for all bear the symbol that marks their common origin, the crouching frog. The things in this room are insured with Java banks for 12,000,000 guilders, my guide told me. Many pieces here were so beautiful that I was rather sorry to think a lot of nasty old pawnbrokers and people must have been called in to paw them about and put a vulgar price upon them, but it can only have been a nominal one at best.

The archæological rooms I hardly lingered in. Brahman relics mostly, Ganesh, Siva, and the rest. There is a crypt below that is a shadowy Hindu Götterdämmerung in volcanic stone. Statuary and sculpture of this kind I prefer to see *in situ*, part and parcel of a complete architectural design.

My guide spoke, with some enthusiasm, of the ethnographic galleries.

I imagine that a person really learned in such things would, after ten minutes' survey of these collections, dash out to take a house in Weltevreden, or at the

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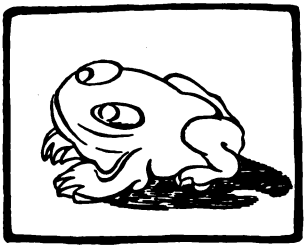
least engage with the proprietary of the Hôtel des Indes for a room *en pension*. Even for the veriest amateur it was annoying to have but one hour or so before the boat left. What ought one to remember best? The amazing collection of Javanese shadow-show puppets of all periods, the "Doll's Wedding" and other set-pieces so characteristic of the child-like genius of these folk, or the more exotic rarities from every far-off island of the Indies, north to the Philippines, eastward to New Guinea, and southward to Timor, Flores, and beyond?

Here are staring wooden gods and totems from them all, symbols so crudely but powerfully significant as to put Epstein's wildest vagaries into the mantelpiece-ornament class for Sunday schools. So prepare to be shocked, or rather not to be, or pass on if you will to the models (all native) of houses, canoes, domestic implements, weapons, nets, hat-racks actually (even cannibal Golliwogs have such things), the *batik*-work appliances, and working paddy-mills in miniature. Wonderful photographs too. The pattern on that decorated house-front? Why not turn the facts of nature into art? Design began that way, and here you see it in the process.



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Taking the train to anywhere of importance in Java usually means getting up in the dark. Nobody knows why, but it is so, and few trains except "locals" ever leave a terminus later than 5.30 a.m. This necessitates

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careful staff work, paying bills overnight, and bribing your particular hotel *Jonges* to produce coffee and a taxi at some unearthly hour. Nervous as to whether or not mine properly understood what was expected of him, I spent my last Batavian night in a rather jumpy condition. Dozing from 9.30 p.m. to an unguessed-at period, I woke up enough to look sleepily at my watch and find it stopped at 11.35. But I hadn't had to strike a match.

The room was filled with a cold, creepy light.

So the boy had failed me horribly, and it would be to-morrow's Buitenzorg train that I must wait for. Best, though, to have a shot at the thing, so here's for a Dutch bath, a cold and shivery affair too. A positive leap into clothes and a dash into the open to see if I can find that taxi myself, hotel bells having apparently stopped functioning.

What is this? Pale stars gleaming in a still inky firmament, pale reflections of them winking back from puddles at one's feet, a vista of arc lamps shimmering and sizzling in the rain, the grinding of gears and rataplan of engines from the club garage over the way. Dutch damsels, fellow-guests of mine, skirted thigh high and cloaked to the ears, hurriedly picking their homeward path over the mud. The wind brings a gust of *Say it with Music* from the Harmonie Orchestra. The ball not over yet! And that horrid light? It was the only one whose switch I hadn't found, a silly sort of faked flambeau thing. Thrown back from veranda-roof and walls and projected through the window of my chamber, its cold and inhospitable ray had made a fool of me all right.

But I caught the train, and through forty miles or so of not very exciting paddy lands, from which we presently started climbing, was borne to Buitenzorg,

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whose station adjoins a sort of Battersea Park that has nothing to do with the real gardens. You get to them by bearing half-right and, as a rule, following the crowd, the place being a great resort of pilgrims of every class and age, notably mixed parties of boisterous school-children conveyed hither for the improvement of their minds.

I am bound to say these famous gardens left me a little cold. Dutchmen, in my experience of them, are not at all boastful people. Tell them of a thing you have seen somewhere else and they never attempt to deflate your enthusiasm with tales of some similar but infinitely superior phenomenon at Scheveningen, or perhaps in Sumatra. There is just one exception, the Buitenzorg Gardens, whose absolute unapproachability in their kind is a thing taken for granted by every Dutchman, an unshakable tenet of the national creed in fact. "See Buitenzorg and die" is what he thinks. You can see it sticking out of him, though perhaps he doesn't bother to say so. I suppose that 95 per cent of colonial Dutch adopt this attitude, without having actually visited the gardens themselves. They take them on trust, like the Londoner his Tower and Westminster Abbey.

Of course they are wonderful. Economically considered, I suppose these collections really are unrivalled, and the perfectly planned and organised nurseries and experimental stations the best thing of their type in the world. But visual impressions of the gardens proper are disappointing, or were so to me. To the eye of memory at least, Kew seemed lovelier far, Peradeniya infinitely more bewildering and strange. When one considers the extreme maturity (for the tropics almost antiquity) of this great cultivated area (to traverse its main paths alone is a six-mile walk), the pictorial effect

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—the *coup d'œil*—seems somehow incommensurate. I wonder if it is that at Kew, say, the palms and orchids are all under glass, while here the anæmic ghosts of our Western flora are the only exotics, the rest seeming to fit ordinarily into the landscape. But that cannot be, for at Kew the *genius loci* hides himself in no glass-house, but lurks in thickets where London raindrops are always pattering.

What the guide-books call "the renowned Kanari Avenue" is all right in its way. Every tree a hundred feet high as per specification, "Gothic arch of foliage" complete and unbroken overhead, luxuriant thingumbobs rioting beneath according to plan. But somehow not so very wonderful, and I think perhaps I know why. The "Avenue" itself is far too narrow. Double its width, and you would quadruple its dignity.

There is a tribute I should like to pay to the people who have this place in charge. Its walls enclose something more than a botanic garden. For one thing, the truly regal palace and pleasaunce of the Governor-General; for another, a graveyard, on whose ancient but carefully tended stones you can read history, much of it British history.

Crowning a grassy tumulus near the main entrance, embowered in trees, is a little stone cupola on graceful pillars, the tomb obviously of some personage. She was so, Lady Stamford Raffles ("one time Governor of Java"—perhaps you had forgotten it). Careful hands are here busy every day, you can see that. The stone is spotless and the lettering as legible as it was a hundred years ago. And not here alone. One of those winding paths will lead you to where, in the heart of a grove of giant bamboos, is a glade, most cool and shady, where outside racket never seems to penetrate. It is a cemetery, reserved seemingly for officials and their families

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of the Raffles epoch, British ensigns and Dutch Secretaries, Richards and Corneliuses, their wives sometimes. The whole most carefully swept and tended.

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Idle hours by the lake (*Victoria Regia* flourishes here, though not, strangely, in Singapore) were beguiled by a Javanese urchin of the establishment whose task that morning was the cleaning of a fountain in the lotus pond, quintuple-jetted. At his age I should have adored the job myself. Your weapon a long sinuous rotan of the type with which one copes with stoppages in the sink, in the first place one waded out to the adventure through waist-deep mud, enormous sport in itself. Raking each of five orifices in turn, the devil of it was to get each jet adjusted to an equal height. Piling up the pressure and then letting go worked wonders. You did that with one, two, fingers, or the whole of a tightly-screwed-down palm. In extremity, you sat on the whole affair. Gorgeous! Parties of strange little boys and girls who would cluster at the pond's edge to goggle and scoff, you could rake with a turn of the wrist.

Outside there is a natural history museum, not free like the gardens, the charge, I think, being 50 cents. All the Malayan fauna one has heard of here, but oh, so very dead—leopards, bears, whole festooned families of orang-utan, undersized and rather seedy-looking tapirs, rhino, and *seladang*, and the head of a water-buffalo 10 ft. 6 in. across from tip to tip of horn, shot by some sultan in Sumatra. Pallid corpses of all the batrachians, fish and reptiles known to science in the Archipelago, float in spirits of wine—birds, of Paradise and elsewhere, perch unconvincingly on twigs. There is a spiny echidna from New Guinea—an odd anomaly

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—some dugongs—horribly unflattering these to the mermaid of song and story.

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BOELELENG.

Looped across the Java and Banda Seas from Sumatra to New Guinea, on any map you can see Insulinde festooned like a pearl necklace. Centred just where it should be hangs its fitting pendant, Bali, a gem unmatchable, unique. Oddly, practically no one in Singapore has ever heard of it. Except the small Dutch colony. They know about Bali, and wisely fob off most of the globe-trotting customers who come to their shipping-agents for advice with a tourist ticket that takes its purchaser to Java, and then back where he came from, when it doesn't hand him on to the Philippines. But one of these days Bali will be getting discovered.

There are only 2000 square miles of it, but they support a million happy people. On the map Bali looks as if it must, once, have formed the eastern end of Java—the intervening channel at its narrowest end is not a mile wide. The depth, though, is countless fathoms. Wallace's deep-water line cuts through here. No marsupial, no cassowary, none of a thousand tinier animals and plants of Australasia, have ever crossed that channel of their own accord. There would be, and is, a legend about a serpent god who clove the passage (with his tail I think) to keep a bad boy out of mischief, but it is odds that the channel was there before the legend. Towards Java, too, Bali's seaward face looms impassable, its wooded mountains drop steeply from their 10,000-feet peak into the sea; the western facet of its diamond has an outer shield of reefs and shoals that baulk even the prahus of the Orang Laut.

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And yet some sort of freebooting Indian race did once discover Bali. They also conquered it, and stayed there, probably made of the place a Mogul colony till they became forgotten in the crumble of thrones and dynasties 2000 miles away. But in Bali Hinduism flourished, and flourishes to-day. Religion, custom, architecture, dress, form and feature even, all in Bali betray a characteristic Hindu origin which in the softer airs of this Eden, and grafted upon aboriginal stocks from which the present-day Javanese have likewise sprung, have burgeoned since a thousand years into shapes of strangeness and beauty, pure type-forms, recognisable anywhere to those who have once encountered them, exactly matchable nowhere, certainly not in India.

Art and architecture perhaps owe something to the Chinese. Roofs and gables in Bali will take a pagodaesque upward twirl, the ornate detail of gateway to court or temple mimic the tracery of a Chinese grave you remember in old Malacca or Penang. Heaven knows when the first Chinese touched at Bali. Even to New Guinea they must have gone, for at points thousands of miles apart in the Archipelago Dutch ethnologists have unearthed, if nothing else, ancient bronze gongs bearing somewhere about them the authentic hall-mark of old China, the crouching frog.

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As with the orthodox Hindu, so to the Balinese his religion is a lively, a colourful thing. He misses few of the old festivals, has evolved some intriguing new ones of his own. Invariably he cremates his dead, with which hygienic procedure the Dutch have never dreamed of interfering. The exit of the departed is a dramatic, even highly picturesque function. The bier, a Gargantuan wedding-cake of rotan, coloured paper, and

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tinsel, is borne in procession before the mourners, the chief of them attired in disguises of similar construction, mopping and mowing trolls and dragons, while the corpse will finally, enhouseled like some dedicate virgin of Old Crete, be committed to the flames inside the belly of a heifer constructed by the village carpenter.

Suttee, too, was kept up with equal heartiness, till a generation ago. I have met one of Boeleleng's local celebrities, actually an ex-royalty, who took sanctuary with the Dutch at what was then their only outpost in Bali, because she found herself lacking when the moment arrived in hardihood requisite to follow the example of a sultan's other twenty-nine wives and consent to immolation on his funeral pyre. She was received hospitably, enjoined not to worry, and encouraged to seek a livelihood in trade by the peddling of old embroideries, sarongs, and other souvenirs of her vanished state. I found her a rather abandoned old lady, but very amusing. She has the relics of extreme good looks and report credits her with a substantial banking account. I doubt if sarongs have provided her only means of livelihood.

You would agree if you were to see them that all the Balinese women are beautiful in their prime, that they all have style, and personality. Here again Bali shows itself worlds apart from India in custom and tradition. There is no submerged class in Bali, even the poorest families can feed and clothe themselves in comfort, thanks to the island's extreme fertility, equable climate, the natural prodigality of Nature in these parts, and their own accomplishment in the agricultural arts.

Balinese men never forget, as the Peninsular Malays too often do, to plant and reap their rice-fields at the proper season, to tend their magnificent cattle, to keep their elaborate dwellings in decent repair. But such

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necessary labour seems to leave them many hours a day for recreation, which is to say gambling in general, and cock-fighting in particular. Little rotan coops in which gamesome champions strut, crow, and flap their wings, are stacked in rows at every wayside halt throughout the island. The Dutch, I believe, have a law about permits for such encounters, at any rate in public places. As to enforcing it, that seems another story.

But those women of Bali! Not a single one that you pass swinging in careless grace along the road, seated straight-backed in the market-place by her basket of village produce, doing a little house-painting perhaps with the air of an R.A. on varnishing-day, but bears herself as if she were Queen of the Earth. And so she is, as much of it as is visible. Throughout Bali the women rule the roost, absolutely. And they deserve to. They command respect, and it is accorded them. There is in Bali a law of dire punishment for whoso dares, in public, to lay a finger upon a woman. It is never invoked.

Thus it is, and by custom they themselves initiated, that save at festivals and occasions of ceremony these splendid creatures walk abroad bared, from the waist up, to the eye of their own menfolk, of any stranger. They can afford to. Without exception almost, they display a classic perfection of form, from shoulder to hip, which happy Fortune seems to preserve for them long beyond their first youth. To anyone aware how in most tropic or semi-tropic countries woman, the burden-bearer, the slave-of-all-work, wilts and withers, corporeally a hag in her twenties, something almost obscene at thirty-five, the seemingly unaging youth of Balinese women appears a portent of enchantment.

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I wonder how Blake, who dreamed of "girls of mild silver and of furious gold," would have been affected by acquaintance with the women of the East, in all their diversity of type.

There are the Malay damsels. They are in youth soft, round little creatures, small-boned, large and languishing of eye behind their veils, merry of disposition, but somewhat squat and stumpy of frame, while their devotion to wooden clogs with toe-fastenings lends them an awkward duck-footed gait. Their Javanese cousin repeats the family characteristics, but in a form noticeably daintier, more the rogue in porcelain. Tamil women have the length of limb most of their Asiatic sisters lack, but anything may happen to their features, which sometimes suggest the Queen of Sheba and sometimes a female Hottentot.

Beauty of face, but never, I think, of figure, belongs to the Chinese maiden. Her ebony tresses are a glory in themselves, her skin has the sheen of magnolia or frangipanni petals, her smile is Monna Lisa's.

A suave and flowing line throughout the contours of neck and thorax is the universal birthright of Asiatic women. Not one in a million displays the distressing vertebral infraction of that silhouette of beauty the nape of woman's neck should present in profile. Yet most European women have this blemish. Frontal "salt-cellars," too, are practically unknown in the Orient. Whether these things are due to racial divergences of diet or slight but constant variations in the anatomical standard of Western and Eastern peoples, I have never been able to discover.

If I were asked which of all the world's races produced the prettiest girls, I should say the Sinhalese.

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But I should think it only fair to the others to point out the one particular in which, at their best, they fall short of perfection, that being their flat feet. Who can be sure that the historic disability of Achilles did not proceed from that distressing but prosaic defect, a "dropped arch"? I wonder if the perfect foot is found in any race where the women go out to work in the fields.

Though generations of toil may have impaired the metatarsal symmetry of Lanka's young womanhood (even the princesses in old days helped with the rice harvest), there is nothing wrong with the rest of them. If left unbound and not saturated with their favourite coconut oil, their hair will flow in crisp, springing ripples below their waists. Lashes of inordinate length shade their ardent eyes. Their teeth are superb, their bodies and limbs, down to the ankles as aforesaid, harmoniously proportioned and conjoined. They are not all equally well-favoured, but the average of striking good looks among them is high. Their type displays features softly but regularly moulded. Many of them are extremely light-skinned: their traditions indeed emphasise the high regard bestowed by fashion upon the Ranliya or "Golden Creeper" girl, whose red blood visibly suffuses her cheeks, a rare phenomenon in the Orient. Normally, too, their countenances glow with a spirit and animation oddly to seek in their saturnine menfolk.

But for sheer imperious beauty, such as in my observation of their sex combines the last humanly attainable perfection of feature, form, and carriage, I must write down the belles of Bali as supreme. In that magical, far-off, forgotten island of theirs, they walk the earth like kings' daughters in Carthage or Old Crete.

> We shift and bedeck and bedrape us,
> They are noble and nude and antique.

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It is only Nature's royal highnesses who can thus conduct themselves and not look self-conscious about it. The Bali ladies *are* queens. Long may they reign, immune from the vulgar espial of tourists and globe-trotters and the even more presumptuous intrusions of travel-writers and camera-men. Let no dithyramb of mine spur Mr. Cook and his votaries to organised invasion of their meridional sanctuary.

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They know, naturally, that they are beautiful. They pursue moreover a sensible and very charming practice by way of aiding Nature in the conservation of their loveliness. I think half a dozen times during a morning walk I took from the hill *pasangrahan* twenty miles or so above Boeleleng, I caught glimpses of some naiad form couched in the shallow wayside stream, a companion splashing the icy waters of the freshet (I know their chill) over flank, breast and thigh, kneading muscle and flesh with a technique that might have been acquired in Bond Street beauty-parlours, a most thorough and business-like performance, with a facial massage to finish everything off; the whole operation conducted with a sublime unconcern for the presence of any casual wayfarer. We were hardly free to linger for inspection of this interesting rite. Our awareness of it was obvious. But nobody giggled. There was no need to.

Not all these divinities have faces as lovely as their forms, but some of them do, a wild, characteristic beauty of their own, un-Indian and un-Malay. Theirs are the great dewy eyes of so many Oriental women, a curious facial contour, broad across the cheek-bones but narrowing sharply to a deliciously rounded chin, the lower lip full and petulant, a proud, even hawk-like,

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carriage of the head. That will be well shaped, the dignity of its lines proof against either emaciation or over-plumpness. The coiffure most favoured is very characteristic, their long hair being combed backward and laid loosely in an enormous "bun" behind the left ear. There are other fashions, but of any really symmetrical disposal of their tresses Balinese belles seem to disapprove. Flowers and gay ornaments, usually of gold, are very much in evidence for the coiffure. Sometimes the temples are shaved and blackened, often a beauty-spot of gold-leaf, silk, or satin, is stuck between ear and eyebrow.

Exquisitely dainty creatures are the little dancing-girls, hardly nubile. Part of their stage wardrobe, as of all Balinese damsels on occasions of high ceremony, is the curious head-dress, *geloengan*, an elaborate toque fitting over the ears, of gold filigree on a rotan sub-structure, crowned with a nodding forest of scrolls, leaves, and flowers, a masterpiece of the goldsmith's delicate art, and worth a small fortune.

Their performance is less dancing, as we understand it, than a species of stationary acrobatics. One would think them double-jointed throughout. Their tiny fingers curl back to the wrists like the tentacles of some sea-anemone. Narrow child's shoulders and hips are cased in veritable armour, skin-tight sarongs of gorgeous silk, cuirasses and epaulettes of stiff gold tissue. Their whalebone spines bend and turn into the semblance of a flattened and tilted Z. Baby faces, white with pearl-powder, remain immobile, all eyes; it is only their spaghetti strands of fingers that twine, the golden blossoms set above their tiny brows that quiver.

That "hardly nubile" of mine needs emphasis. These children are perfect dancers at the age of five, and nearly so at four. At eleven or thereabouts they retire, literally

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on the score of old age, from what Bali considers the front rank of the profession, remaining priestesses of the temple with special votive dances of their own; these, however, of quite a different character. True it is that tourists are invited to behold *passées* young ladies of twelve or so performing, but the connoisseur native audience, quite rightly, absents itself from such inferior and indecorous exhibitions.

The antics of these marionettes, I will say, intrigue me more than the grotesque performances of those Hawaian belles who nowadays bring the unexpurgated Hula-Hula as far afield as Kuala Lumpur. A censored stage version is already familiar in London, also of course the uniform, petticoat and anklets of grass or *kous-kous*, a Maud Allan corsage, floral rope halter, hibiscus tucked behind one ear.

Watch with me "Fem" Kaipo tread this measure as she learned it first on the moonlit beach at Honolulu, or at least so she says, and I dare say we may believe her. Probably she isn't wholly Hawaian—perhaps no one is these days after we whites have cultivated such enthusiastically friendly relations with the happy-go-lucky island folk for so long. It may be a drop of Bowery blood gives the finishing élan to a performance that in her rivals seems a little lymphatic, if unusual. Even elephants at play can gambol sometimes in a fashion to *épater* the *bourgeois*.

But the frizzy hair, the rolling eye, brown like walnuts in vinegar, the curiously flattened if generally pleasing physiognomy, the length and massiveness of limb, thickening a little too generously towards the region of maximum circumference—only the true-born fish and breadfruit eater could fulfil all the tale. You see those characteristics displayed with varying accentuation by the three or four lusty and rollicking young men (one

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BALINESE DANCERS

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has a head whose conical dome, like a Sioux Indian's, is tight-helmeted with crinkled wavelets after the fashion set by Mr. Michael Arlen). The muscles of their very solid thighs twitch rhythmically under the stretched white duck of their trousers as with frantic fingers they scratch, straddled boyishly on their chairs, their steel guitars and ukuleles. Their solid waists are romantically sashed, they wear Byronic shirts, admirably laundered. Indeed, with them the clumsy floral necklace is the only relic of barbarism. They are playing, *con amore* and with extreme competence, *Moonlight in Kalua.*

Fem Kaipo minces on from the wings. A little on the hefty side, but, you will concede, some baby. With not too much of lightsomeness, though in perfect time, she shuffles into a kind of *chassez.* You think that step may take her somewhere, but it doesn't; it has, I imagine, the germ of the Charleston in it. Simultaneously, with thumb and forefinger of either hand, she collects from the air about her a number of small levitated objects, invisible to us, pins perhaps. She then proceeds to rotate her own axis, horizontally at first, then upon a slightly inclined plane, finally, I do assert, vertically. The pin-picking, the Charleston effects, are maintained independently, very difficult, I am sure, like the one-man orchestra.

Then the thing warms up. The lusty young fellows bend their bull necks over ukuleles which they are attempting to saw in half with their finger-nails. Their tight white trousers look like bursting. Their walnut eyes revolve in delirium. Hoarse shouts break from their bull throats. Tarantism infects Fem Kaipo. Her arm and leg jerks are accentuated, centrifugal force turns her grass petticoat into a mop from which the charwoman is expelling redundant moisture.

Her centre of gravity shifts; disappears.

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Like some gross insect, she hovers between earth and heaven. The mop of her petticoat appears now to slide, in rapid segmental curves, over a plate-glass window. Inferior portions of her anatomy achieve unguessed-at ascensions, whole arcs of the horizon are rhythmically blotted out. Even her diaphragm becomes endowed with a strange life of its own. A galvanic contraction lifts the integument of her middle zone several inches, drops it again like a portcullis. Then, like Captain Campbell in his Blue Bird, she decelerates, these processes are gone through in reverse. She collects the last invisible pin, subsides—a little heavily—upon her heels.

The young fellows appear played out. Sweating through their Byronic shirts, they lay their chins wistfully on the backs of their chairs, the ukuleles droop from their numbed fingers. Their thick lips open like the lids of pianos to reveal xylonite keyboards, the octaves picked out in gold. They are glad you like the Hula-Hula.

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I had a rather ridiculous adventure here, botanising. At least it began here, while the climax occurred about 1500 miles away.

There was a garden I had left behind in Kuala Lumpur, an acre of scrubby jungle at the time I took it over, when last seen a more or less ordered pleasaunce, already bright with bougainvillea, cannas, and hibiscus, fragrant with temple flowers, crimson lotus a-bud and fan-tailed goldfish entirely at home in the lily pond, lawns rolled, mown, and shaping well towards that suave and mossy perfection which Malaya's perpetual humidity will admit of in lawns, if only you can keep your gardener up to the scratch. And Sollamuttu was

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an enthusiast. He and I, however, had knowledge of various corners that wanted setting off with something really special. I promised him, and myself, that by grubbing in the brakes and dells of various island objectives in my itinerary I would supply that need. But carriage had proved difficult. One had to tranship so often, and the Dutch lines are great on tidy cabins. A rooty and bulbous tangle tucked, with the connivance of the second engineer, behind a smoke-stack on the upper deck, one day might with luck effloresce into Cattleyas and Dendrobiums, though the odds seemed rather against it. I had nothing else to show.

Then, strolling down from the *pasangrahan* on that hill-top in Bali with my excellent friend the captain, I descried, at the summit of a thorny bundle of shrubs and creepers on the far side of the hedge, a flower. A very fine flower indeed, we both thought, a double bloom, snow-white, the accompanying leaf rather like hibiscus only more so. Twenty yards farther in the leaf occurred again, but the bloom it shaded was a blushing pink.

This was very exciting, more so than ever when, fighting and slashing my way through the scrub, I found yet another variety, same leaf but a blossom that, white as to its outer edges, showed a chocolate centre. This seemed a very good morning's work. I shouted to the captain. He tossed me his clasp-knife. Ten minutes later I stood panting on the road again. Some rather expensive flannel trousers were in tatters, but I waved, triumphantly, three separate wands. Two minutes sufficed to strip the leaves, trisect each wand carefully with the diagonal cut above a bud-swelling. A boy at the *pasangrahan* produced one of those enormous joints of bamboo. We dropped a handful of earth into that, stuck in the precious cuttings, tied a cloth over all,

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and thus, under my bunk, the things stayed for a month, carefully inspected and sprinkled with water at intervals. By Singapore every cutting had struck.

Taken out and potted at Kuala Lumpur, the hibiscoid leaves were soon a-sprout on every one. Sollamuttu appeared not too enthusiastic, but these Tamils are a morose folk. He planted the things out, though. Three months later the first blossoms appeared. *All white.* But at lunch-time a miracle—chocolate stains at the heart, a pinkish blush suffusing some of the petals at their outer edge. With signs Sollamuttu led me out of the compound and fifty yards down the road. In a humble wayside garden bloomed a shrub with leaves that were very familiar by this time. And three sorts of flowers. Rose of Sharon. I suppose I ought to have known. I had read about the things.

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AMPENAN in LOMBOK.

Landing on these volcanic and craggy islands is no joke at all. For Insulinde, Ampenan is quite a sizable port. Only the more rugose species of pebbles will stay on its beach, smoother ones are no sooner rolled up thereon by a swell that heaves formidably between our fifty-fathom moorings and the jetty than they slide grinding and crunching back into the deeps again, and the jetty itself would be a lot longer if there were any taller spars about—a Douglas fir or so—to carry its perilous platform. One wants a perfect timing sense, more than quadragenarian agility, to secure proper foothold on that ladder from the thwarts of a shuttle-cocking dinghy, and still preserve one's dignity.

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Terra firma is far easier to make contact with astride the bull-neck of an Orang Laut, Sea Dyaks of whom we keep a troupe for handling cargo in lots of queer harbourages where skilled labour is not to be got, with your knees locked under his chin. I have been Old Man of the Sea to a score of such Sindbads. Only one wilted under me, and I think then that it was a wave caught him behind the knees when, quite naturally, he wasn't looking.

Certainly not much of a place when you get there, this Ampenan, port of Lombok, an untidy huddle of go-downs, cattle-pens, lean-to wooden erections that may be shops, dwellings, or offices, or likely as not all three. A handful of Dutch and some seedy Eurasians populate it, better conditioned if rather hangdog natives, and shoals of their scampering, stone-throwing young. Also crated pigs, whole avenues and vistas and alleys of them.

If Blake's robin redbreast in a cage sets all Heaven in a rage I cannot think the Dutch Governor at "care-free" Buitenzorg, or even his British confrere at Singapore, can be very popular with the seraphim. Doubtless few robins lead jolly lives in cages, efforts at making it up to them with blue skies and starry constellations painted trickily on the ceilings of their prison-houses notwithstanding, but they can at least turn round in such. The pigs can't, though, not in those egg-shaped basket-work contrivances whose stacked array is an ever-present abomination about the wharves and landing-stages of every port in the islands, and at which thing even sophisticated Singapore looks on and does nothing, though people there are sometimes known to write to the papers about it.

For its wicker envelope fits the live pig like a cocoon its caterpillar, the animal can breathe and even (in a

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piggy fashion) feed through interstices of the same, and pens are outmoded, it being handier to stack pig on pig four to six times over than to occupy large linear spaces of only one pig-thickness. A wriggle is allowable even to the middle course, if not carelessly protruding legs, which may, and probably will, be broken or dislocated, or gnawed by other pigs, savage or merely starving. This equipment is also found sitable for sea-travel, and more sociably than a grub in the honeycomb your pig will fare hundreds of miles as a deck-passenger, in all weathers.

We got out of Ampenan and made for the interior in an aged Ford, bumping after a few miles into Mataram, with its Dutch bungalows bowered pleasantly in well-ordered gardens. But the Chief pointed out to me one peculiarity, the extreme solidity of all compound walls, still apparent beneath a generation's growth of tropical verdure.

Every compound must once have been, could still be made, a fort. Some notion of the why and wherefore you will get from the fact that the hub or navel of this verdant and flower-fragrant township is a very creditable war memorial. For this was where the battle was, thirty years ago, says the chief engineer, and the first two of those carven names are a Dutch general's and his son-in-law's. Wiped out, they were, the last little lot of them, in that temple where the sacred banyan springs in a court walled by massy ramparts, again inviolate, for the iron door will give no passage.

When the Dutch arrived in Lombok the Kings of East Bali, denying any political significance to Wallace's deep-water channel between the two islands, although a whole continental flora and fauna seemed, by toeing the line there, to respect its irrefragability as a neighbour's landmark, were discovered to have come over

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into Macedonia and helped themselves. Actively, and in a highly feudal fashion, they were enjoying every kind of usufruct Lombok had to offer. Notably large ideas history records them to have had of what was due to overlords from their vassals. Tithe, tribute, and first-fruits they took, and then some, skimmed the cream of everything, and gave a very liberal interpretation to a *jus primæ noctis*.

Of course, the Sassaks grumbled, and when the Dutch came along with obviously preferable ideas about inter-racial amenities, the Sassaks took heart of grace, and hamstrung a few of their tormentors. Quite aware whom they really had to thank for that, the Balinese upped and scuppered a number of Dutchmen, and there had to be an expedition, two in fact.

The first punitive force, as we know, got as far as Mataram. Hardly out of sight of the sea. If the high command entrusted with its operations were to blame for what there took place, as other high commands in conditions not dissimilar have ere now brought themselves under suspicion of blundering, their later apologia were never copyrighted serially in all countries. Time has washed the bloodstains off the old temple wall, and left the memorial lettering to speak for itself. There was not any very long delay before the second expedition arrived. This was an elaborate affair, and more, well—punitive.

The Dutch have gone in for "frightfulness" before on what they deemed necessary occasions, and may do it again, claiming that some of these island folk, when on the war-path, provoke infractions of the rules really, in their case, necessary. But actually I have no facts about all this, only rumours, except that Dutch historians vouch for one episode in the final encounter, when, the day obviously lost and the king a prisoner, fifty

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Balinese princesses, all in their harem finery, fearfully and wonderfully tired heads royally upflung, hawk faces staring with kohl, vermilion and pearl-powder, ran upon the Dutch bayonets, tearing asunder gold-wired bodices to take the steel between their breasts. It was quite their own idea, and very embarrassing for the troops.

One gathers it was not really the Sultan of Lingsa, Ratoe Agoeng G'dé Ngoera Karang Asem, whose fancy ladies sacrificed themselves thus dramatically in atonement for the ignominy of his defeat, who was really at the bottom of the trouble, but his vizier, Goesti Djilantik, a Balinese aristocrat who considered, like so many viziers before him, that he was just as good as his master in all the ordinary ways, and much cleverer, ergo, why not be king himself? The Dutch not proving the instruments of his advancement in the way he hoped, he managed, with the rightful monarch a prisoner in their hands, to escape from the stricken field, convey his traitorous person to Bali, and with some sort of a tale so work upon the folks at home as to acquire a second-rate kind of sultanate among them. And in a part of Bali, at least, his grandsons still rule. Asem, meanwhile, graced the home-coming Dutch triumph at Batavia, and there languished dolorously in jail till he died.

From Mataram it is fifteen miles by winding road to Narmada, and there on the hill the stones have hardly begun to crumble of that palace of pleasure raised by Asem for the housing and entertainment of his female entourage.

At Anuradhapura I have surveyed what is left of King Gamani's royal dovecot, and deplored that it should be so little. At Brighton I have gazed upon (and you too, gentle reader) that congeries of stately

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pleasure-domes decreed by the First Gentleman in Europe, and prayed that its decomposition might be accelerated. But Narmada is like a palace of Sleeping Beauties. They all pricked themselves with needles, the pretty creatures, you remember that. They must be somewhere about still, if one could only think of where to look, knowing well what to do if one found them; the place stands so plainly ready for them all.

Swept and garnished yet are these chambers, courts, refectories, and dormitories *de luxe*, all the kitchens, stables (room for fifty Sumbawa ponies, palankeens, or perambulators), the usual offices and, above all, baths, for cunning engineers have not only terraced the hill to manifold semblance of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, but harnessed all watercourses of the district to a hither and thither interplay of torrents, fountains, and freshets that gush out at every corner of the exterior masonry.

Guardians of the wall at every few paces are the gargoyle torsos of Hindu-Javanese mythology, their bizarre lineaments familiar from the shadow-show puppets and *batik* sarongs of our earliest commerce in these parts. Banks are bright with rare hibiscus and the purple croton. Where the waters spread lake-wise Lombok girls are washing clothes among the lotus pools, anon dipping and splashing their own olive bodies, careful not to look our way, but not unconscious we are looking theirs.

They reserve for Europeans now the private bath of the sultanas, a walled acre of it, with a little stone kiosk, dressing-chambers, and benches for basking purposes between whiles. Here the sun's kiss is welcome, the crystal flood you cleave with such abandon, run through a mile of stone conduits from some spring in the heart of the hill, constricting your innards with the true chill of ice.

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It gave me, anyway, an appetite for *Rijstaffel* at the *pasangrahan.*

And behind Narmada, whose older name is Tjakra Negara, there is Lingsa. General repute gives it the finest temple in the island, but for some occult reason a godless one. Only offertory places are shown to you by the custodians, and what gods there must have been either lie doggo in some subterranean crypt or have been secretly bartered by the local hierophants to Batavia museums, or it may be that Goesti Djilantik, before his ultimate withdrawal, gouged out the pearls and rubies that were their eyes, scraped the gold-leaf from their plurality of limbs, and later incumbents have never dared reveal the sacrilege. One day perhaps offertories will accumulate to permit of refurbishing and reincarnation.

Lingsa, however, still boasts its sacred pool. About the size of a suburban drawing-room carpet, and standing foursquare within a low wall of ancient masonry, its attraction draws all the local population to squat upon their hams at its brink throughout the livelong day. We strangers approached. It seemed a very ordinary pool, but a yard or two deep, weedy withal, and with hints certainly in its subaqueous shadows of grottos with mysterious orifices, aquaroles perhaps of Plutonic reservoirs. Was it our office to trouble, like another distinguished visitor, that glassy calm? For a ritual of some kind seemed about to begin.

The priest who convoyed our party set us right about that. At this juncture a small subscription would be in order. No difficulty about it, of course, but where should we put this mite of ours? In the pool? Why, certainly, and we watched our glistening quarter descend in side-stepping curves to the pool's bed of gravel. Or was it gravel? One bent and peered, and

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decided that it wasn't. Just hundreds of thousands of subscriptions, quarter-guilders mostly, but lots of fifty-cent pieces, whole guilders too and dollars and rupees, a glint of gold even. Recent offerings showed up bright and shimmering on a drift of tribute black from long immersion.

Curiouser and curiouser! There was life in the tank, minnows and fresh-water prawns and crayfish, that hovered, darted, and scrambled now in the weedy tangle, but a melanistic and unnatural life. Minnows, shrimps, crayfish and crabs, sported a uniform sable livery. The silver perhaps, or some sulphurous strain in the water, possibly both. Everybody knows people who "turn" their watches and jewellery by mere physical contiguity.

But there was a phenomenon, a star turn, to come. Leaning over the wall, our mentor rapped thereupon, and went on rapping. One onlooker, impatient for new developments, dropped in another quarter. The old priest still rapped on the wall. He, if anybody, must know how to work the talisman. Willy-nilly, the Djinn must and would appear.

And appear he did. Someone grabbed my arm and pointed to the deepliest shadowed corner of the pool, where fronds in the dim grotto waved slow and rhythmically, swayed, it seemed, by the pouting breath of some monster crannied in the deeps. Then a heightened agitation, the slow propulsion of a blackness which took vague shape as the muzzle of a—crocodile perhaps, giant terrapin, six-foot Chinese salamander? Truly a monstrous mouth, leathery, tentacled, whitish beneath, parting the weedy veil to reveal, piecemeal, advancing gingerly and imperceptibly as a Zeppelin from its hangar, a head, with blind-seeming eyes, white, tiny, malignant.

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The head came on and on, and behind it about a yard of horrid leathery body. How much more there was of the beast I never knew, for after hanging poised for a space it withdrew, in similar spectral fashion, into its lair. It was just a fish, as it happened, a very old, creepy, Silurian *espèce de poisson*, but its apparition was excellently stage-managed, and struck us all as being quite an eerie enough spectacle to satisfy the sort of people we were on a nice bright afternoon like that one. Only once, very lately, have I seen any exhibition at all comparable, when I watched a conger-eel come half out of his hole at the Zoo Aquarium, and then think better of it. He, however, was an Adonis among fish compared to my Lingsa Silurian.

We asked our guide if there was any special virtue in this revelation. Yes, very much so. But nothing particularly out of the way. The usual fertility business if we really wanted to know. Married ladies of Lombok often—— And foreign ladies too, occasionally. Did it work? Sometimes, it depended on circumstances. No, not any magic was known throughout the islands that ensured a contrary result. Of what use would be such a magic?

We stopped again to loiter among the terraces for another hour, and called up Henry to take us back to Ampenan and the ship. The quick dusk came down. Someone laughed behind the hibiscus, eaglet eyes in a young, white face flashed momentarily from the shadow, or one would have sworn so. A patrician pallor, some of these Lombok girls have.

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From the deck I watched a gorgeous sunset over Bali, the shifting spotlight of its reflected fires dissolving, tone by tone, upon the swart flank of Lombok's Gunong

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Rindjani, four-fifths as high as Mont Blanc and 400 feet higher than the Aiguille du Dru. Somewhere up there is a crater lake fifteen kilometres in circumference, but it takes, the captain said, a week to climb up to it and a complete Alpine outfit to see you round in safety.

At nightfall we loaded cattle from lighters, scores and scores of dapper little beasts like Jerseys. Just one, of clumsier build and with an odd cant about its horns, must have had a marsh buffalo somewhere in its family tree. There was bellowing and stamping in the 'tween-decks, then only subdued munching. Four bells went as we ground up fifty long fathoms of chain, and the anchor came home with a muffled clanking. Our mast-head lights made a slow pirouette against the inky firmament. From somewhere in the upper air the look out man's call rose and fell again, sweet and unearthly. Across a sea of quicksilver, we crept away to Labuan Haji.

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MAKASSER.

More than any other port of Insulinde, Makasser is redolent of antiquity. What it presents to you is not the ageless, changeless air of so many an island settlement (there are hundreds in these waters that do that), which you are aware looks exactly to-day as it looked a thousand, perhaps ten thousand, years ago, where, for the parrots, monkeys, and monkey-men that populate them, history has in fact marked time since the Flood. Men from Europe have lived, striven, and died here to make Makasser what it is, a shoot of the Elizabethan West grafted centuries since on an exotic stock, strangely flourishing still, in its way part and parcel of modern history, with that quality or patine about it which only

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great age and long usage can bestow upon cities built with hands.

Traces of this quality are observable, but less so, in Batavia, its focus spoiled by the overshadowing newness of Weltevreden's developed suburb, hardly at all in Sourabaya, whose modern office and smart hotels appear to be extricating themselves with difficulty from a squalid huddle of Javanese or Chinese shop-houses. A little perhaps in far-away Malacca, of which the dignity and charm diminish, alas, year by year.

It was not the Dutch who really founded Makasser, but the Portuguese. They generally did, as you find when you come to explore the history of these parts. Early in the seventeenth century the place was an appanage of the King of Goa. A Van Trompish sort of admiral, one Speelman, laid siege to Makasser and captured it in 1667. Preferring that this change of ownership should be ratified by treaty, he dictated one. The Portuguese commander signed it. Speelman drew his sword, stuck it through a coconut tree, and left it there. That was his signature.

Makasser is not a fake. Its gabled barracks and church are a little bit of old Rotterdam. Its ceaseless business activities go on, not behind plate-glass shop-fronts nor the stucco façades of office sky-scrapers, but in cool and darkened chambers, shielded by grilled verandas from the narrow, climbing street, of quaint old houses compact of solid stone and brick.

Its thousands of native shops (there are distinct and populous Chinese and Arab quarters) do an enormous trade in commodities that few Westerners could identify, save that here and there a smell seems vaguely familiar. There is an incomparable fish-market, where a whole galaxy of smells, known and unknown, are transfused

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and transfigured into one grand sweet essence of all things ancient and fishlike.

When you have had enough of this, dive into some alley where the spice-merchants (we are on the fringe of the Moluccas) crouch in their dark entries between little mountains of nutmeg, clove, cinnamon, and a thousand shrivelled and aromatic mysteries. And then, when so much muskiness cloys, and you feel like fresh air and sunlight, go down and bask on the merry little *plage*, where there is a toy jetty, gulls and a few kites wheel over the bright sea, cut between you and the mile-off sands of the Lauley Bank by an ominous black triangle. The sharks of Makasser are a byword.

The real natives here are not a prepossessing type, gay and open-faced, like the jolly Javanese. Their countenances are insignificantly Semitic. They all wear ugly red sarongs kilted above the knees. That is all that struck me about them.

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I was very happy in Makasser, lounging in the daytime along the shady side of its streets, prowling its alleys and jungly suburbs in the mysterious and scented dark. There was company of your own sort if you wanted it, a combative editor who ran a most up-to-date bookshop in the intervals of proof-correcting. You could buy the books of almost any English author of distinction there, which you can do with few Dutch writers in Oxford Street, and my friend was bitter upon the stupidity of our publishers in never trying to exploit a first-class foreign market (his English books he learns of by hearsay, and because British firms never send him their catalogues has to order them on his own initiative).

There is also a Concordia Club, where they encourage the arts in very practical fashion. Two hundred Dutch-

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men and their wives arrived one night I was there, to welcome a visiting pianist of reputation. Likewise an admirable hotel (the "Oranje"), in whose fine ball-room a quite *mondaine* world disports itself in frocks more or less straight from Paris.

If you can make any sort of a stay here, procure a car or some convenient quadruped, and transport yourself to Maros.

A drive of thirty miles through tropic grove and rice-field, a biggish river to be crossed by ferry, and you find yourself at the foot of an enormous limestone crag. The tabular formations of the Malay Peninsula over again. But you will not find one in British Malaya with a half-size Niagara coming straight over the edge.

My honourable and gallant friends the captain and chief engineer of the *Sloet van der Beele* were my guides on this excursion, people both, like nearly all the Dutchmen one meets, of impressive and somewhat ample habit. But extremely active and sporting characters. It was they who made me bring bathing-kit and old shoes, warning me they might be wanted. Here, at the foot of the falls, they ordered me to get into these things. The other Englishman present hadn't got a bathing-suit, or any shoes he didn't much want to keep. All four of us proceeded to shin up a rusty, slippery ladder that was riveted to the cliff. The fall's solid column cut the air about a foot from one's right ear. The cliff face was all in shadow. God, how cold it was, how the spray blinded and the thunder of the waters deafened the four clambering frogs that we were!

But at last that climb of what seemed hundreds of feet brought us to a tunnel. Not a real tunnel, but the bottom of a tremendous cleft or canyon. Here the ladder ceased to support us, and the river itself became our path. Not very deep, two or three feet perhaps, but

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the devil to make headway against with the craggy floor macerating one's feet at every step.

The flood now grew waist-high; we advanced mainly by dint of arm-work, hand-over-hand clutching of spiky protuberances in the wall that still hemmed us in. Three-quarters of an hour of this—and then we saw it was worth it, for the canyon widened out, tree-clad to its still far summits. Farther yet, and an exquisite little savannah stretched before us, cupped in the embrasures of cliff, butterfly and lizard haunted. Incidentally, somewhere to rest our aching legs. We were glad now to be friends of the captain. His Dyak boy had strapped a hamper, whose contours suggested Dutch beer and sandwiches, to his shoulders, and leapt out of our ken at the foot of the falls like a chamois. Here he awaited us on the savannah, watching the love-making of grasshoppers.

The chief engineer had lashed a Kodak, bound in oiled silk, to his belt. He took photographs which help to keep that scene alive for me.

We swam in the first calmish pool we came upon, paddled a mile or so farther up-stream, pulled up a fish-trap, made faces at the occupants, a green crayfish, a purple crab, a little bright-eyed long-nosed fish, and put it back again, played at being Adam. There was no Eve. That climb is no pastime for women. The obstinate ones will try it, sometimes. A Dutch girl was drowned in the upper falls only a few months before our visit.

During these gambols it was borne in upon me that the chief engineer possessed a doggedly unscientific mind. He took, however, a childish and quite naïve delight in the works of Nature. We disturbed a snow-white heron on sentinel duty in some shallow of the brook. It rose, with deliberation, and flopped majesti-

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cally out of sight across the tree-tops. "Nice cockatoo, uh?" said he. The little, smooth-bodied, glancing skinks he saw as "young crocodiles," all visible genera of arboreal ferns and epiphytes as "orchids."

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Aboard, that night, we celebrated the captain's birthday. At breakfast the saloon had been graced with a gigantic floral trophy, inscribed valentines from all the "Etat Major" tucked away among its orchidaceous splendours.

We filled the festive bowl; not even a procession of dud bottles of hock and port handed out of a bar from which no passenger for years had demanded or expected to see produced anything save Dutch lager beer and Dutch gin, were allowed to cast a shadow upon the *entente*. Even the Filipino stewards seemed to adore their skipper, and ourselves, liking most Dutchmen, liked none so well as him. There were one or two little difficulties over the toasts, but our hosts surmounted them charmingly.

A Director of Agriculture from Zanzibar (bound for Amboina to compare notes above cloves) announced that he both could and would play the piano (likely from lack of custom also—another dud). An ambassador of the B.A.T. produced a ukulele. It was an Anglo-Saxon trio that serenaded the bridge with *Nobody's Darling*, on *lucus a non lucendo* principles. The chief engineer obliged with his own version of *Yes, we have no Bananas*.

Searching for Borneo's coast at peep of dawn, it was the outlandish oil machinery of Balik Papan gave us an odd kind of landfall.

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Formerly the English had Balik Papan. They have

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left their hall-mark there. Graves in the cemetery. Probably we swapped it for something, anyway there is more than enough of Borneo to go round. On the other side, at Miri, we have a very nice oil-field of our own, or so they tell me. But the Dutch must do well out of Balik Papan, where oil, paraffin mostly, appears to gush from the ground every few yards, bubbles up in the sea even, for some of the huge condensers here are sited actually between the tidemarks.

It seems curious, in this verdant island world, to come suddenly upon a towering metropolis of industrialism, to perceive the skyline for a mile or so broken with the giant outlines of chimneys, condensers, pumping-stations, and reservoirs, each of whose capacity is 4000 tons of crude oil. Yet the bulk of the raw petroleum comes from Sanga-Sanga, several miles away. There is a coal-mine half a day's march up-country.

Thirty years ago, this place was a Boeginese fishing village.

Naturally, the Bataafsche Petroleum Maatschappij owns and runs everything—the fleet of tank steamers off the jetty, the town's one tram, the people's park, the club, the *roema sakit*, or hospital, the cemetery.

Our own line, the K.P.M., were pioneers in the use of liquid fuel, so the chief engineer says. Twenty years ago, he remembers, it cost five guilders a ton, less than ten shillings, that is to say. After that they bought it for twelve guilders a ton—on a long contract. Then it jumped to 120 guilders, and from that moment the K.P.M. have taken to burning coal from their own mine in Borneo.

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MINIHASSA.

Zigzagging back to Celebes in the night watches, we made Donggala at dawn. It was the narrowest neck of

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this debilitated starfish of an island that we impinged upon, the indented bay of Palos makes it narrower still, and we stole round the point at daybreak steaming south and east.

Palos Bay looked gorgeous. A light breeze flung catspaws across its moon of chrysoprase. Thus early, the air had in it the fillip of September morn, somewhere in Surrey. The little port, palisaded fish-traps jutting into the sea, a go-down or two, a Boeginese *kampong* on stilts, basked in the clear morning light. Behind it, tier upon tier, soared the green mountains of Celebes, and high up on the first spur one picked up with the glass a house, the island home of one's dreams.

The captain said I could have his boat, and I took him at his word. It was a longish pull ashore from our deep-water moorings, and after a steady uphill gradient, two miles of hairpin bends in the only road out of Donggala. No one was at home in the house of my dreams except some Crown pigeons, preening and ruffling in an aviary by the porch, who pointedly ignored me. Then some sort of Malay butler materialised from the jungle. His master, the Controleur, was on tour, but would I not come in? Well—for five minutes perhaps.

But I spent longer than that in the range of lofty, shaded rooms, which house the finest collection of island stuff I had encountered since Weltevreden. The Controleur was particularly a connoisseur of weapons, for which one pictured his ranging the whole Archipelago. There were *krises* from Sumatra, trident spears from the Celebes uplands—old Dutch helmets. There were candlesticks and coffers too of the Hollander's making, a great silver lamp from Achin, Chinese pottery and plates from Heaven knows where, ceramics and lacquer of Bali and Lombok, sarongs and *batik* fabrics from half a hundred islands. A scribbled greeting

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to my host I dropped in a big bronze rice-bowl, and turned to scamper down an avenue of royal palms to the road. Three warning hoots from the bay echoed among those high hills.

Where the road dived into a coconut grove, I marked a forest within a forest; springing from the floor of these lofty aisles hundreds of slender stone columns, mingled with them hundreds of little stone discs, male and female emblems of Boeginese mortality.

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While daylight lasted, and another night, we kept the northern arm of the starfish on our starboard quarter. From Donggala to Palele is 300 miles, almost, and as much again to the tip of Minihassa, which gives you 600 miles for one arm, and some idea of this starfish's dimensions. And there is another amusing thing. If you gaze at the map of the Celebes Sea, at the Big Bear of Borneo away to the west, nothing ever looked so unlike the Celebes starfish (or squid). But if some very potent devil were to give the bear a downward push, just enough to submerge half of him, and a corresponding upward heave to the starfish (or squid), we should get two brother bears on the map. In their skeleton contour, these so dissimilar islands actually are twins.

One gets these curious repeated patterns all along the volcanic belt of Insulinde. Halmaheira, away to the east, is another and smaller Celebes, an embryo Borneo; Ternate's sugar-loaf, sticking straight up out of the sea on Halmaheira's left, tops a row of almost identical cones, Tidor, Motir, Makian, and the rest, stringing right down to Batjan Island.

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At Palele dawn lifted her veils again over the Celebes mountains. Slowly we steamed along this winding bay, anchoring in deep soundings between the largest of its thousand islands and the port, thirty years ago a famed stronghold of the Boeginese pirates. To-day its population thinks and talks solely of copra. Twirls of smoke on our right mark the gold-mines of Bwool; not paying, as the captain informs me, but hope will spring eternal in the breasts of those who have once caught this fever.

There is no beach visible at the foot of these wooded steeps, but there must be one of sorts. A prahu whose lines are to us exotic pushes out from the tangle, a funereal barque, whose black sail catches and bellies to the wind. A fuzzy-haired Charon straddling the thwarts beats once, twice, on a big barbaric gong.

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On then to Amoerang, past an unfolding panorama of increasing strangeness, rugged promontories alternating with fiord-like inlets, walled by crags on which high forest somehow finds roothold. Rearward, the mountains rise in regular gradations till their ultimate peaks are lost in the cloud. Any beach that shows tilts sharply into deep water. The coral polyp has got a foothold somehow though, and down in the engine-room there is a constant clanging of bells till we have nosed our way clear of this maze of reefs and rocks.

Amoerang, and another dawn, shows us a new sort of background. The forests have slipped down from the shoulders of the peaks, and the jutting ranges show stark and forbidding, as they do along the western end of Java. Earth seems to begin again in mid-air over a *Gnabelmeer* about a mile thick, where loom the twin crests of Menado and Toewa Island; behind Amoerang,

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Lokon, Sempo, Lolomboelan, rise up shoulder to shoulder.

We thought we would get off here.

Amoerang is an oldish settlement, but unlike Makasser seems to have lost its dash. Once it called itself, like so many an island outpost, a fort, and still shows you with pride its solitary cannon. Amoerang's one enterprise that has not gone smash is a brick-kiln, run by a wizened old Chinese.

The Minihassa natives are fine creatures physically, upstanding and muscular, with a rather Japanese physiognomy. They profess an aggressive form of Lutheranism, wear hideous shiny black clothes and the stub-toed boots and wideawake hats of hard felt associated with the name of Dr. Stiggins, cultivate a prunes and prisms greeting for all strangers in the street, but are very cruel to animals. A friend of mine once knocked one down for kicking his foundered pony, was manhandled and frog-marched to jail by a crowd of infuriated Stigginses, and it took a Consul and two Controleurs to get him out. Miscegenation seems to have good results in the Minihassa. It was a princess served me with cigarettes, whose father, someone whispered, was a distinguished field-officer from the Hague.

A stream, delightfully tree-shaded, tumbles down here from the hills, its waters iced like sherbet. Little frogs of boys paddled about in it. Minihassa maidens were washing their hair and their clothes. I leaned on the bridge and watched them, trying to decide whether I could afford a car to Lake Tondano. There were so many expeditions to come. It seemed I couldn't.

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I have no particular use for Menado, calling itself

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the second city of Celebes. It has a fine roadstead, second only in the Minihassa to Amoerang's, but not so safe, quite dangerous indeed in the west monsoon. Even its noble ring of promontories, Klabat, Doewa Soedara, Lokon in front, where the Tondano River falls to the sea, leave me cold. I have known so many harbourages that I want more than that. Most of Menado's white inhabitants were Nosey Parkers. They wanted to know my age, occupation, bank balance, and whether I was married, within five minutes of making my acquaintance. But civilisation is a long way from here.

My notebook reminds me I played a game of billiards at the club (table terrible—Dutch opponent betrays a biassed mind when marking up the score). Item—dinner at the hotel (terrible—likewise the immediate company). But a cheerful evening afterwards with much jollier folk. All the girls in Menado seeing off two nice B.A.T. boys. One of their own cadets, also under sailing orders for the morrow, is getting left.

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TERNATE.

I love these K.P.M. boats. Obligingly, their captains always time their best landfalls for daybreak, and I am thankful to have discovered Ternate that way, or rather the first vertical mile of it, for the other still sulked behind its sombre cloud-cap. We hoped its temper would grow worse, that it would flash its lightnings and boom its thunders at us—it does sometimes for travellers. But no, with every hour of this particular day its mood grew more equable. By noon it had shaken, lazily, the wrappings from its shoulders, bared, in ineffable and lofty majesty, its forehead to the winds of high heaven.

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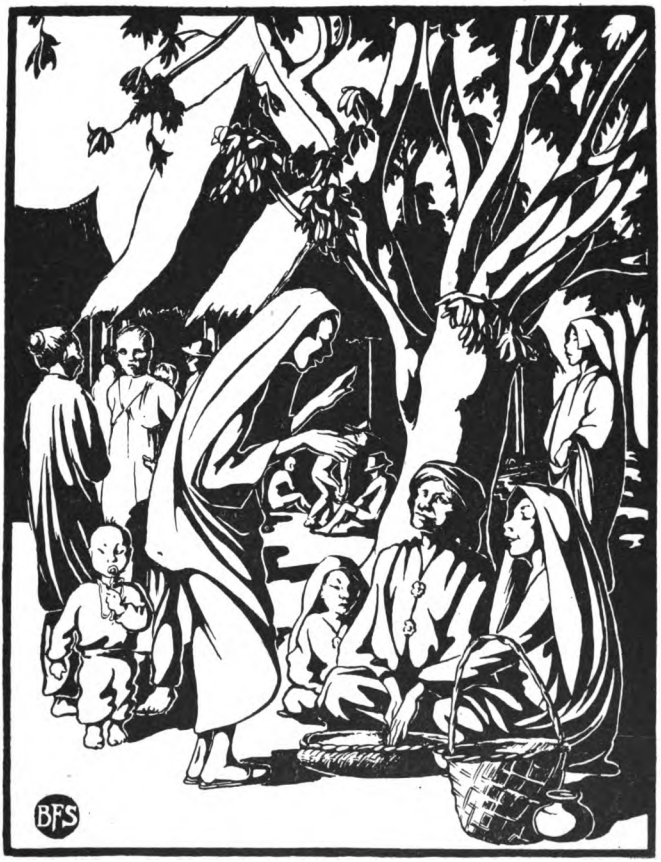

GOSSIP

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You would think that here before you looms Olympus; if any dwell here, that they must be gods. But, alas for Ternate, it is not so. Perhaps awe of the very majesty of their environment has quenched the divine spark, cowed into mere brutishness the instincts of such creatures as crawl and grovel at Ternate's foot, calling themselves inhabitants. Time was when heroes resorted hither, our own Drake, more than one Hollander, nay Portuguese, of mettle. But now you shall look in vain among Ternate's groves for the easy-going planter even, whose once comfortable, once solid dwellings, storehouses and factory sheds, now crumble into rubble under nutmegs high as the chestnuts in Bushey Park, their branches raucous with squabbling parrots, their aromatic harvest a-burst and rotting on the ground.

Certain hangdog and villainous bipeds creep among these ruins. A stunted and decrepit race, rational thought is a process obviously beyond them, human speech almost outside the limit of their capacity. They do no honest work; the only indication of a commercial instinct nascent among them seemed personified in one who squatted by the road, his dull gaze bent on five mildewed tubers exhibited in a rotan basket, which some dim intuition prompted him might find a purchaser.

Church and mosque in Ternate remain in daily use, but have a derelict look, imparted by the patchwork of corrugated iron with which roofs and walls are maintained in repair. These cobblings have rusted already into tatters. Attap, woven leaves of the coconut, will probably be the next resort, and the last.

A mile along the unmade and littered road, flanked at one corner by boulders on whose summits gnomes with matted hair blinked from the crevices of a group of crazy huts, you will arrive at what is called by courtesy the Sultan's Palace, now a species of museum.

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Even if it is locked, the white ants have arranged an easy entry for you. What I guessed to be very rare and precious knick-knacks, silver-gilt helmets, Portuguese and Spanish, suits of armour and gold-mounted flint-locks, continue to defy the only workers in Ternate. But not so the tinsel dancing-dresses and the Paradise plumes.

The shipping lines still maintain a trading-post or so here, if they did not Ternate would become merely a legend. I believe a priest or two likewise lingers in the place, buoyed up with hopes of the salvation of souls. But the cretins I met on the road have all lost theirs, and even the Jesuits would hardly know where to find them.

I was told that the wrong sorts of mixed marriage in the first place, followed by centuries of in-breeding, have brought this folk to the condition in which I encountered them. What often threatens, and that is a real whole-hearted eruption of its own pent-up Plutonic furnaces, would be the best thing that could happen to Ternate. Re-stocking would be a very simple matter.

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HALMAHEIRA.

Or perhaps it would be better to leave Ternate altogether to the birds. It can breed those, to a lusty, vociferous, chromatic, and plenary perfection. Cockatoos, lories, parrots, raucous of plaint, refulgent of plumage, though there are species of the greater cockatoos snow-white and an almost raven-black (as big, this last fellow, as an eagle); equatorial prototypes of our thrush and blackbird, if much inferior vocalists, more modest, these, than the parrot tribe, but still resplendent; a multitude of gaily caparisoned finches

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chirping and chattering in the brakes; and shooting flame-like through the forest's far recesses beauty's shy daughters, the Birds of Paradise.

Glancing through the existing pages of this chronicle, it surprises me that there should not be more in it about the birds of Insulinde. I must have taken them for granted, forgetting that you, O reader, could do no such thing.

Actually as passengers on this boat, bound on far journeys too some of them, we now have a respectable avian population. Saloon passengers, the ship's officers, the crew, have all become bird-fanciers within the fortnight, the steerage deck is strident with a din passing the Parrot House in Regent's Park. Jewelled bundles of feathers are commoner here than sparrows at home; if life can be sustained in them till Singapore, some of their owners will have earned much pin-money.

Not a few rarities have been transhipped to us here, starting their travels at Papua. On the lower deck are two cassowaries, penned perpendicularly in crates, like young giraffes. A half-fledged youngster of the species has much more fun, being given the whole run of the ship, and taking full advantage of the same. You have only to cross the boat-deck to feel a savage peck at your heel, and turn to find something like the caricature of a Christmas turkey, but grotesquely wingless, mocking you with a grotesque *pas seul*.

It appears that since yesterday myself has owned a crimson lory and two white cockatoos, shackled by clumsy rings of coconut shell to a bamboo perch. They bite freely at rice and bananas—and one's fingers. They seem a promising pair, and cheap at five guilders.

The quivering sharp noses and rabbit ears of two wallabies (tree kangaroos) are poked between the bars of a hutch that has just been dumped between the smoke-

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stacks. When they have settled down, to these also shall the freedom of the ship be allowed. More crates of orchids are handed up the gangway. We begin to look like a Thames house-boat with a circus aboard.

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But I remind myself that I never mentioned the Fräulein, for all that she was the most human of all that dream Odyssey's queer contacts.

We were told to expect her at Sourabaya, a young German lady travelling to quite the most far-flung island of the Archipelago, far beyond the itinerary of our own sufficiently venturesome keel, to get married, forsooth.

She kept the ship waiting, too. At last we descried her, in the agent's launch, in which a sallow sort of duenna person returned after farewells at the gangway.

At that first dinner in the saloon we perceived that though Fräulein P—— was eighteen, and dumpy, outwardly a mere *Backfisch*, she had poise. Shy she was, but not gauche. Though he spoke German for gallantry, she would talk to the *Hoofd* in his own language, Russian to the impresario taking his ballet-ladies to Makasser. To me she prattled, gravely, of her "engached," who could not, it appeared, meet her anywhere nearer Stuttgart than Ternate.

Even here, we were a long way from Ternate, and Stuttgart too.

The sallow lady at Sourabaya was some connection of her "engached's," she told me. The family name that was to be hers was fine old seventeenth-century Dutch.

The Fräulein came ashore at Bali with us. Her physique did not belie its promise that she was the stuff Channel swimmers are made of, and when we

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discovered the ancient swimming-baths of the Sultanas of Narmada she disappeared for a moment to array herself in a Teutonic species of *maillot*, dipped and gambolled in that icy flood like a *junge Entlein.*

From port to port we went. Her blue eyes grew wider and more wistful. There seemed never to be any letters for her. She wrote, regularly, long ones addressed to *Familie P.* at Stuttgart, which the captain always posted for her.

The German colony at Menado cross-questioned me about her. They seemed to be aware, vaguely, of the "engached," but told me nothing about the gentleman. They wanted to know if she was getting letters from him.

"Er hat nicht geschrieben?" they repeated, when I told them. "So!" and wagged their heads solemnly.

I had to tranship at Ternate, surely the terminus and end of all things in a world whose poles were static and identifiable, and included Stuttgart. In a roundabout way, I was starting for home again. But not so the Fräulein, who shook hands with me gravely and abstractedly. It was here she began another lap, and that hardly the last. Surely, on this adventure that was hers, she should have had company from now onwards, if no earlier. The signs, though, did not even indicate a letter.

Saying good-bye to the captain, I hinted my anxieties.

"It is fery rotten," he said. "That yoong *schellum.* His sugar estate is busted they say. Spending all many thousand guilders in dot trip to Europe. His black wife in the islant, she cling round his neck. He also is black, you not know, uh?"

"But the name?" I said.

He snorted. "Fery goot Dutch name, yes. He is goot family. But these are the islants."

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As we slip south from Ternate, its full majesty becomes for the first time apparent. Hugging its foot, you cannot focus the Peak's Olympian stature and sublimity. A line of such giants in replica loom equidistantly to starboard, Tidor, Motir, Makian. Between these outposts and Halmaheira's towering silhouette we have to thread, laboriously, a maze of densely-wooded islets, large and small. At a biggish one we stop to take on copra.

Copra, again, is the sordid excuse that sends our anchor splashing before breakfast, to bring us up short against the tiniest fishing-village conceivable. Halmaheira at last. From a boat, I make the shoreward passage squatting on the neck of one of our retinue of pirates. The fourth officer, in charge of the party, informs me that the ruffian I bestride has still a price on his head offered by the Philippine Government. He bossed a most sporting raid into those regions just before signing on for the present trip. "Stole all the best girls, too." A Sabine maiden or two aboard as supercargo, I shouldn't wonder if we had.

I strolled through a coconut plantation with the Resident of Ternate, now on one of his peripatetic inspections, and a fellow-passenger. It appeared he owned this plot, and the village that supplied its labour. Ten guilders a month was the chief's salary. There were fifty heads of families, and religious privileges for all, dispensed by a resident Imam.

Copra gambling in Menado was the devil. And the Dutch are not the worst. The month before a Chinese lost 80,000 guilders in one deal, which he hadn't got. His compatriots found the money promptly, slump or no slump. They stick together, the Chinese.

An amusing long-nosed bird rocked on a twig above our heads. It had a yellow bill and a blue body. A

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Jahrvogel, I learned—a knob on its beak for every year of its life.

The Resident complained of having nothing to occupy him in this billet. It took two months to get round Halmaheira in a prahu, but though there were never any political knots to unravel when you got back, you might just as well start over again as not. He was reading *Jean Christophe*, which seemed exactly the right sort of book.

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BATJAN.

At Batjan, whose quite considerable township piles itself street on crazy street up the lower flank of its 7000 feet of mountain, they told me I was the third Englishman this generation had seen. The other two were B.A.T.; that great tobacco trust does wonderful pioneer work.

There is not a mile of open sea visible. Nothing but islands.

I was very lucky here. My Ternate friend, dutifully met by his junior, the Controleur of Batjan, wanted to go and look at the first school ever opened in Badgo, six miles down the Straits of Obit by Government launch. Rather remarkable *Zeetuinen*, the Controleur said he had discovered there, Amboina and Banda Neira had nothing better to show. He was still waiting for a marine biologist to come and catalogue some very odd fish that hours of observation above those other coral grounds had never shown him.

Would I come?

Zeetuinen, good reader, are Nature's own aquaria, ocean nurseries where some happy conjunction of depth, current, rock formation, and temperature, rouses the coral polyp to their best and most variegated efforts, a submerged Paradise for all the finny tribe, the mollusc,

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the crustacean, for life that runs the complete gamut from animal to vegetable. Nor does any citizen of this submarine republic fail to flaunt his pride and pleasure therein by donning the gayest habiliments Nature's wardrobe will provide.

Hanging over a catamaran's side on the Ceylon coral reefs, I have observed some amazing spectacles, but nothing to touch the miracle Providence was good enough to unveil for me here in the Banda Sea. Real *Zeetuinen* are very rare, though you might not think so. Tropical waters that one may surmise hold all manner of marvels are mostly too disappointingly opaque to give away their secrets.

As we churned down the straits we overtook thousands of nautilus as big as footballs. Shoals of gargantuan dolphins caracoled on our beam. Fifty minutes' run brought us to Badgo.

They seem to distrust dry land, these villagers, perching their quite commodious little dwellings on long piles bedded in the coral. Their main street is a semicircular causeway, only the extremities of which make contact with the shore. Corduroy pathways of split bamboo spring perilously as you tread them, but even the babies exhibit a Blondin confidence. It seems one can get born, live, and die here very happily without going ashore; all vegetables in the Boeginese dietary are cultivated in little earth-filled prahus disposed window-box fashion, whose harvest, with that you garner from the sea by dropping your fishing-line through the parlour floor, furnishes all your needs except clothes, which don't matter—in Badgo.

While my Dutch friends inspected their precious school (five times more boys than girls, they told me afterwards—parents even in Badgo not holding with much book-learning for their daughters) I dangled my

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legs over the causeway, just where a brightly-banded turtle was trying conclusions with its tether, and compiled an aquarium catalogue of my own.

Below me, in water clear as glass, outlined against a parterre of coral shelving from one to three fathoms and then into verdant deeps of obscurity, there flashed successive cohorts of:

Black-and-white parrots—some with green tails. These were striped.

Some more rather like them, only spotted.

Three shimmering ghostly shapes, a wonderful opal gleam on their grey-green scales.

Narrow mauve and white stripes the next lot, like Edinburgh Rock.

An animated pancake, same colour and texture, but somehow every inch a fish.

A baker's dozen of ditto.

An apricot mullet with a blue head.

A hundred polliwogs, of an absolutely dazzling Chinese blue.

I am not inventing—I had my notebook on my knees.

After these—a devil. A banana-and-chocolate devil, with a body and fins like two locked aeroplanes.

My Boeginese ally says a veritable *ikan*. Obligingly, he produces a big triangular shrimp-net, and with a few adroit passes brings the devil to land. Its aeroplane wings wilt to filaments of jelly on the instant, but one notes a little gasping mouth and topaz eyes at one edge of a rubber disc, rather like a new penny. The Resident comes up. He cultivates an interest in such things, but has never seen one like this before. So we put it back, to wait for the marine biologist. It balanced a little uncertainly, spread its aeroplane wings of banana and chocolate, and swerved into a purple thicket.

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Homing through the leaping schools of bonitos (it was their turn now) towards our ship's hulk, just to be perceived snuggling into the foot of Batjan mountain, the young Controleur poured his troubles into my ear. Mightn't this place be a penal settlement? The skimpiest fringe of copra and one or two other feeble attempts at cultivation were all the concessionaires had to show in forty years. One or two Dutch women had lived here, but all they did was to have babies. The Boeginese gave no trouble, he only wished they would. Two years of this after one of Ternate was enough to send anybody off his chump. Go fishing? Oh, yes, if one could be sure of catching pearl oysters; a trader picked one up worth 1200 guilders the other day. Dash it, there was nothing to *do*.

I should have thought there was plenty, but I didn't say so.

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AMBOINA.

Soela Islands lay to starboard, and this was Sanana. The usual 5.30 a.m. commotion on the lower deck, where the pirates were launching their boats to collect Sanana's copra tribute in. A grinning figure leaped down among them from the first-class alley. "Tobacco Jack," clad in shorts and a bush shirt only, flourishing what looked like a telescope case. Going ashore to learn the natives to smoke. No cigarettes in the case—hadn't

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brought any on this trip—nothing but propaganda, toy mirrors with the trade-mark on them, a dozen immense rolled calendars advertising all the branches of the Woodbine family, with the winsomest, beamingest, longest-pigtailed Almondeyes of a Chinese flapper pointing them all out to you with a plump ivory fore-finger. Mascots no Chinaman can resist, especially when he gets them for nothing.

I admired the tactics of my young friend, certainly not less so when I gathered he came from Rugby and finished up the war as a staff-captain. Sir Eric and his little axe had checked him in his leap for fame and fortune. But not for long. Trading cigarettes was now his job, and he was putting his back into it. I followed him round, when our buccaneers had hoisted us ashore, and he struck a bee-line for Sanana's shopping quarter. There is at least one Chinese-owned general emporium on every island where man can live in Insulinde, and this was a biggish one, so I counted twenty-three.

Into one after another of these Tobacco Jack burst with the heartiest of, "Tabek! Tuans." That went down, like doffing one's hat to an orange wench, the ghost of a smile would split the ivory mask. Bang would go a sheaf of Almondeyes on the counter. "Reclames roko roko, toko di sini" (Anglice: "Herewith some jolly old cigarette ads. for this very fine store of yours"), followed by a cheerful flood of small-talk on the weather, the copra market, and what not, all in the most fluent Malay.

The *towkay* would betray no undue elation. Almond-eyes would be handed over, almost disdainfully, to a minion, a jar of cheroots produced—sometimes the schnapps (he called it *viski*). Half an hour later perhaps, glancing into that dark interior, you might observe Almondeyes disposed on the attap wall abreast of the

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smoking joss-sticks, her plump finger-tip lifted to the Woodbine packet as it might be to a flower or butterfly. Squatted behind the counter, an ivory image puffed its opium-pipe, blinking, sometimes, in her direction.

Outside, in the open-market place, the pocket-mirrors were tossed into the air, and all the children scrambled for them.

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A repulsive lot of islanders, those of Namlea in the Boeroe group, hideous creatures who skulked out of our path, as we explored their village, like pariah dogs.

Apart from the beastliness of their inhabitants, the Boeroes are famous for the best cajaput oil in the world, better even than Amboina's, whose output is more advertised. You know the stuff, wonderful for neuralgia and kindred aches and pains. It is the expressed juice of a small birch-like tree, a silvery and graceful object (*Kayu puteh* means "white wood" in Malay). It will cure all kinds of things, the worst sorts of eczema, mange in dogs.

Arabs keep the trade of these places alive. I went ashore at one small island, Samana, with a handsome old tulican from the steerage. He owned it, lock, stock and barrel, the captain afterwards told me, and had paid the Dutch 40,000 guilders for it. It was worth that for its damar. We had an amusing ramble up the bed of a dry watercourse, meeting by the way divers snakes, lizards, land-crabs, walking fish. A fallen tree bore clusters of a rare orchid, and I salved them. We were going to bathe, at least I was, in the only pool we found, but the tulican's overseer said we hadn't better. You couldn't see them, but there were crocs. A stiffish wind rocked our prahu on the homeward passage

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till we thought we should get our swim after all. Then we got into a current, and to make the gangway was the devil.

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After Makasser, give me Amboina. Some, indeed, would prefer it. It is just as old, just as much a part of Portuguese, Elizabethan British, and Dutch history. Its Portuguese fort, roamed of nights by a legendary ghost lady (no one seemed to know her story), its splendid old Dutch church, the beautiful double bay, hour-glass-shaped, over which you steam for hours in mill-pond calm and step straight ashore from a forty-five-fathom anchorage, have not their peers in Insulinde. The indigenes, too, possess their points. Ambonese are a stocky breed, work-shy but dead keen on soldiering, indeed supply most of the Dutch colonial army's rank and file, all its N.C.O.'s. Your Ambon brave will tackle anything from a Borneo *amok* to a Sumatran Achinese on the warpath.

Ambonese girls are sulky beauties. Abroad they mostly attire themselves in black, like the Maltese ladies, though not, I believe, for the same reason. If you can believe what you hear about them, it is sheer perversity prompts their cultivating so demurely downcast an eyelid.

The Dutch here are very hospitable. Where, indeed, throughout this tropical empire of theirs have I found them otherwise? The difficulty in Ambon was to get to bed, what with skittles and beer-drinking, and *cafés chantants*, a.m. sittings over bridge, when all the cards in the pack were mossy-faces and one found oneself doubling "Drei Röte" without being absolutely certain what it meant, also a sheer and most prodigious gamble known—save the mark!—as "Intellekt," when

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you won three hundred guilders and dropped it before you could say knife.

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There are hilly walks behind Ambon, and the most gorgeous views over the Bay. The Dutch had their work cut out playing watch-dog here to various German cruisers in war-time. One of them complained to me that our recompense was to commandeer most of their mercantile marine. At home in Holland, the goodwives took out ration-cards for their sugar and spice.

My Dutch friend drew my eye to the feathery clumps of cajaputs up here. He was great on economic products, enlarged upon Ambon's wealth of medicinal herbs, and showed me the sago-trees in the lower thickets. Ambonese women sit by the road, their trays spread with unappetising grey lumps that you would not fancy for use in milk puddings. I suppose the stuff we get is just "denatured," as the Patna rice of commerce is bereft of all its vitamins. The Ambonese live largely on sago, a tree of which will last one family for a year. But there are many Ambonese, and the Dutch say reafforestation is falling behind their necessities.

In a shady corner of the path, we disturbed a durian picnic. But there was no disturbance for us, we had smelt it a mile off. A dozen young girls, all making rather beasts of themselves, one Dutch damsel among the duskier sisterhood. My friend said her mother would spank her—not colour prejudice, about which the Dutch bother very little—rather because the *al fresco* gobbling of durians is bad form. But they will do't, if they come to't, and I have known English grown-ups just as weak in this matter.

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We strolled down to the Bay, and my friend produced

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a launch. To see Ambon's famous *Zeetuinen*, why not? But I found it not a patch on Badgo, for fish and fantastics generally, though better off in its variety of living corals. Indigo starfish lay about. One far-sunk flower-bed there was the loveliest ultramarine, a peacock fish hovering over it like a butterfly.

For days we stayed here. When it was too hot to go exploring, too early to swim in the club's most admirable *pagar*, I tried a little fishing from the boat-deck. The amethystine deeps were alive with shoals of something as big as salmon, but I only got one bite, and drew up a rust-encoated windscoop.

On my last morning an old, old man crawled up the gangway, nursing in his arms a box about two feet long. Inside there was a ship, a lovely ship. The ship was built of cloves, hundreds and thousands of them, tightly strung on wires altogether invisible.

I have it still, this Molucca prahu with high curly ends, ten rowers tugging at their sweeps, a little clove-man bending over his stern oar, lateen rigged with a pennon at the mast-head, a big gondola cabin amid-

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ships, and what convention understands to be an Ambon bride and bridegroom taking the air upon its roof.

When I open the box where it lives I am back there again. All the ships I ever sailed eastwards of Singapore in smelled just like that.

It is not the nerves we see and hear with that are the best registers of our experience. Some memories are never scored in our diaries, but laid up in lavender.

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Much more expensive than the cockatoos and the lory was the multi-coloured parrot I bought here, and that the same afternoon bit through its coconut ring and flew over Amboina church into cloud-land, screeching derision. The cockatoos saw it go and were moved to emulation, but their beaks were too young and tender, or their coconut shells too seasoned and tough. So they fell back on screeching, and bit the fingers of Tobacco Jack's lieutenant to the bone when he sought to comfort them with a banana.

A cage of sorts seemed indicated, so I bargained with an Ambonese basketry expert for something handy yet commodious in rotan. Twelve hours later he turned up with it, a bijou residence adequate for fifty canaries, even a lone cassowary. We borrowed some gloves from the mate (last used for skating, he said, on the Zuyder Zee), and our menagerie only lost a few feathers in the move.

At Wangi-Wangi the stock had another recruit. A green, long-tailed misery with a monstrous carmine bill. Most mopy and mournful he was, but the little lory chummed up with him forthwith. When the cockatoos hissed at his protégée he lifted one scaly eyelid, turned a lugubrious optic very slowly in their direction, bent stiffly and slowly from his perch, and

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gave the nearest bully a tremendous peck in the rump. After that occurrence each side occupied its own sphere of influence.

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BOETON.

We are heading W.S.W. from Ambon, for the lower right-hand arm of Celebes. But we shall not see the starfish again for a week. More islands in the way, and we have some calls to make there. Five times in a day I have known this happen. K.P.M. passengers very seldom have to complain of monotony.

The captain's charts fascinate me. But I believe he would know his way without them. Boeginese pirates never bother with such things, nor the fuzzy-wuzzies from Papua, and often their long prahus come riding into Ternate roadstead, Makasser's even.

Moena Island this is. Not copra, praise be, this time, but something quite novel. Jabbering and shouting on the lower deck betray a more than usual excitement, and there is a complicated bustle going on along the tree-fringed shore. A hundred yards of it becomes detached. A sea-serpent advances upon us. No, it is being towed by twenty prahus, two or three crews of our buccaneers lend their aid.

The serpent twists and winds towards us, the oily seas curl back in foam from his muzzle, swirl in his wake. Creeping along our beam, he turns upon himself at our bows. He means to catch us in a hoop. The worm Ouroboros.

He has broken his back, poor Ouroboros, his two halves swing and flap along both our counters. Our jabbering *orang laut* send ropes snaking through the air, pygmies rise up from his crest, catch and haul upon them, jabbering, make all fast.

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Ouroboros is a timber-raft. His load is ironwood, great baulks of it like the teak you see the elephants piling by Irrawaddy's stream. Its specific gravity is such that if a log breaks loose it nose-dives to the bottom and stays there. There are no wharves or derricks on these islands where it grows, and ingenuity, therefore, has evolved Ouroboros, though whether he is the product of Dutch or Boeginese resourcefulness I do not know.

You fell a thousand bamboos, the longest and strongest ones in the jungle. You lash them into faggots, forty, fifty, sixty feet long. Linking these faggots head to tail gives you a hundred-yard super-faggot, jointed. For the larger rafts it may be six feet thick. You duplicate this super-faggot, or bolster, launch the pair of them side by side. With stronger ropes you form a kind of sling or cradle between, trundle up your ironwood baulks with levers of smaller timber, stack them all shipshape between the floats by means of rope pulleys. They may be submerged several feet, but the bamboo floats ride high and snugly on either side. Sometimes the jungle men who clamber, up in water to their waists, among the logs, helping in the steering or general manœuvring, get taken by the sharks.

Shipping the stuff into our holds was another awkward job, and incessant whirrings and bumpings jarred our ears throughout a sweltering forenoon.

The lumberjacks of Moena know no Malay, their gabble resembled more a strange dialect of English.

At Raha we shipped more timber, teak this time. The clatter of derricks still sang in my ears, so I went ashore.

Raha will be remembered by me with a shudder. Not one really hale and hearty man, woman, or child could we distinguish among the scrofulous top-knotted crew

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who swarmed at the landing-steps and in the sprawling village beyond. What a come-down was here from the lusty, vigorous, and comely races we had met and admired in Ambon and Minihassa. It seemed amazing that such physical disparities could exist among near neighbours like these island communities. But once any tribe, through warfare, famine or epidemic decimating its hardy warrior spirits, grows too enfeebled to carry on the nomadic freebooting traditions of their ancestors, they seem to be done for. Their surviving units squat about on muck-heaps, scratch themselves, and eat carrion. It was disgustingly apparent that these folk were in the last stages of degeneration, moral and physical.

Raha remains populous though, far too populous. As in Namlea and Ternate, it is plain that nobody here has ever heard of the prohibited degrees of affinity, or would have taken any notice of them if they had. To incest add rampant syphilis, and the circle of life's little disadvantages in Raha becomes complete.

Boeton Sound opened ahead of us like the gates of Faery, and the squalor and corruption we had left behind were only a bad dream.

High walls of rugged limestone towered a stone's throw from either side of our poop, but stone so

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weathered and eroded, crannied and terraced, as almost everywhere to give foothold to a lush tangle of greenery. On the easier gradients high forest clung somehow to these crags, and there were few faces of the rock where no shrubs had fastened their roots, no creepers trailed their curtains.

The indicator on the bridge registered half-speed. Swan-like, our ship rode forward, cleaving the surface of that canal of chrysoprase. There were fifty green fathoms under our keel all the way, but our wash just swayed the piles of tiny *kampongs* perched at the cliff's foot. Other huts clung perilously to the tops of high rocks, diminutive brown folk peeped from their thresholds, round-eyed, like squirrels.

The strait opened out, funnel-wise, became a gulf. Neat little structures grouped in the shallows of the widening lagoon puzzled us, for they had a sophisticated and business-like air. A Japanese culture pearl station.

We might have been on Lake Windermere. A village, more than a village, crept into definition on its farther undulating shore.

Boeton. Quite the most idyllic station of any which this island empire of the Dutch has called into being. Natives happy and healthy to a man. Ashore, a Garden of Eden. Clean streets and small native shops, backed by a quaint old *kampong* in the coconuts, unusual carvings on its high stilts, great plates of translucent mother-o'-pearl, window-pane oysters, dangling from the thatch. The folk here gather to meet us, pearls cupped in their hands, tame birds on their shoulders. To sell, yes, but so cheap the things seem gifts.

All the Europeans from the tidy little bungalows cosily bowered in their green hibiscus-starred gardens

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row off to the ship as dusk comes down over Boeton and its lagoon. Some of them are homeward bound. So are we all.

Westwards we headed, and the lights of Boeton twinkled and went out.

. . . . . .

ENVOI

MAKASSER again, and an island or two we know, noisy Sourabaya, hurried but cordial farewells, a strange cabin—no longer that old-fashioned square port (Drake from his state-room high in the stern of the *Golden Hind* saw things that we have seen through just such a magic casement). A host of loud commercials in a mail-boat saloon. Four days to Singapore that are likely to be not much fun. We are going to be seized by the elbow, and dragged into smoke-room foursomes, and the cards will be De La Rue's, not mossy Valentines. We shall be heavily ragged for woolgathering.

"Look alive, partner. Lead on Macbeth!"

"Wassat you're muttering? Poor old Shakespeare? Why poor old Shakespeare?"

"Misquoted twice in three words? I don' unnerstand what you mean, smarty."

. . . . . .

But the new cabin holds a herbarium, and the aviary is aboard somewhere, with a steward's eye on it.

There was time for woolgathering, or rather the sorting

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of a harvest already gathered. Memories, impressions, pictures in the mind? Plenty of those last.

To have trodden the Moluccas' farthest beaches, so long ago a boy's dream of the ultimate limit of adventure, chimerical, unattainable. That was something. "Who has been to Ternate, or Lombok?" inquires the Jesting Pilate of our age, as if he hardly expected an answer himself.

I have for one, and even Mr. Huxley would perhaps envy, momentarily, this little fellow, if he were to get to hear of it.

I should like to ask a question—"propound a query"—myself. What can they know of Holland, who only Holland know? There is a jingle (even Mr. Huxley quotes it) about "giving too little and asking too much." I have known other people than Dutchmen at whom, anyway "in matters of commerce," which is the limit of the charge, that burr of criticism might be thrown, and stick.

Whatever else Insulinde showed me, and that was much, I got from it an object-lesson on Colonial empire-building—and empire-keeping too (a corollary that Englishmen ought to note)—that, barring very minor reservations, fills me with profound admiration, approving our own different methods as I do, and patriotic Englishman as I may call myself, or hope to. Insulinde means a lot, almost everything in fact, to the tiny little corner of Europe (population seven millions to Java's thirty-five) from which so many nerves radiate to its great ganglion on the Equator, and the Dutch at home do well to guard it with jealousy and devotion. But how worthily they construe the responsibilities of that guardianship! Singaporeans of the broking persuasion, even some of our own Government officials who ought to know better, I have heard sneering at a race that

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will "go native," or partly so, to keep a ramshackle dominion together, that "D.E.I." which they have the cheek to call "*India*" if you please.

Well, why shouldn't they? The Elizabethans, who set the fashion now thus disapproved, were promiscuous enough with that label. "Savages and men of Inde" might hail from any quarter of the globe that was not Europe. "Island India" is about 2000 miles across, rather more extensive than the triangle we have coloured red by the Bay of Bengal. That span covers, or will do so, not one empire, but three. The Moluccas, they are the monuments of the past, but a past with what glory, colour, and romance in it! To-day it is Java that demands the bulk of Holland's energies as the political and commercial hub of her dominions overseas. To-morrow it will be Sumatra, undeveloped, not properly explored even, but packed with possibilities no man as yet can judge of. You may observe how it dwarfs our own Malay Peninsula on the map.

But I meant there to be no politics in this book.

. . . . . .

Pictures, not politics certainly, were in my mind as the taxi, piled high with oddments of extra luggage that made the loungers on the portico of Change Alley goggle their eyes and poke chins in scorn over the collars of their *tutup* coats, careered among the rickshaws and the cars between the "Europe" and Tank Road Station.

Two of my own fellow-countrymen, I think, had talked to me in two months. Tobacco Jack and the man in Amboina who after four years of it was so much more at home in Dutch.

It would be good, in a way, getting home again.

The Tamil porter, faint but perspiring, was being

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helpful with my very miscellaneous luggage. Then one item of it had a narrow squeak between the platform and the guard's van.

"Where's my sleeping-berth? Never mind those bloody parrots!"

Six feet of terai-hatted arrogance glowered in my direction.

The lead had struck English ground.

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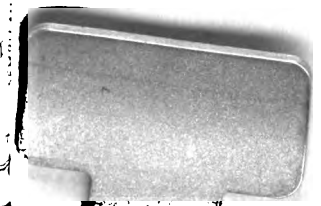

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